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POEMS BY  
LORD BYRON



Mansell

## LORD BYRON

From an engraving by H. Meyer, after G. H. Harlow

POEMS  
BY  
LORD BYRON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
ARTHUR SYMONS

THE GRESHAM PUBLISHING COMPANY  
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me, or indeed to distinguish it, in any vital or audible way, from prose. Now and again personal feeling slung off the ill-fitting and constraining clothes of rhetoric, and stood up naked; sentiments of resentment, against his wife, or against the world, or against himself, made poetry sometimes. Then, as it was to be under other conditions in the later work, his flame is the burning of much dross: excellent food for flame.

And yet, out of all this writing which is hardly literature, this poetry which is hardly verse, there comes, even to the reader of to-day, for whom "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme" is as dead and buried as Napoleon, some inexplicable thrill, appeal, potency; Byron still lives, and we shall never cease to read almost his worst work, because some warmth of his life comes through it. Almost everything that he wrote was written for relief, and its effect upon us is due to something never actually said in it; it is a kind of wild dramatic speech of some person in a play, whose words become weighty, tragic, and pathetic because of the fierce light thrown upon them by a significant character and by transfiguring circumstance.

When Byron wrote to Murray, "You might as well want a midnight all stars as



# Contents

The Vision of Judgment	-	-	Page
The Destruction of Sennacherib	-	-	1
Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte	-	-	55
Ode from the French	-	-	57
Napoleon	-	-	64
Waterloo	-	-	69
Epitaph for William Pitt	-	-	73
Vision of Belshazzar	-	-	80
Greece	-	-	81
The Prisoner of Chillon	-	-	83
The Coliseum	-	-	85
The Dogs' Carnival	-	-	101
Mazeppa's Ride	-	-	103
The Falls of Terni	-	-	106
An August Evening on the Brenta	-	-	111
Venice	-	-	114
Rome	-	-	116
Nature and Solitude	-	-	120
Lines on hearing that Lady Byron was	-	-	125
ill	-	-	129
Stanzas	-	-	133



# CONTENTS

	Page
Stanzas for Music - - -	145
She walks in Beauty - - -	136
When we two Parted - - -	137
Oh, snatch'd away in Beauty's Bloom	139
Euthanasia - - - - -	140
And Thou art Dead, as Young and Fair - - - - -	142
Stanzas written on the Road between Florence and Pisa - - -	145
To Thomas Moore - - -	147
So, we'll go no more a roving - -	148
Italy and England - - -	149
Epistle from Mr. Murray to Dr. Polidori	155
The Coteries - - - - -	158
Dedication to "Don Juan" - -	161
Character of a Learned Lady - -	170
Juan and Julia - - - - -	176
Julia's Letter - - - - -	180
Poetical Commandments - - -	184
Youth and Fame - - - - -	188
Fame and Time - - - - -	193
The Shipwreck - - - - -	198
Juan and Haidee - - - - -	211
Marriage and the Muse - - -	219
Troy - - - - -	222
Great Names - - - - -	224
Change of Illusions - - - -	229
Life - - - - -	231

# CONTENTS

	Page
The Glory of War - - - -	- 234
A Battlefield - - - -	- 237
Wellington - - - -	- 245
Don Juan at St. Petersburg - - - -	- 251
Newton and Poets - - - -	- 254
London - - - -	- 256
Poets of the Age - - - -	- 260
Carpe Diem - - - -	- 265
The Age of Indifference - - - -	- 271
On my Thirty-third Birthday - - - -	- 276
On this day I complete my Thirty-sixth year - - - -	- 277
NOTE - - - -	- 279



# The Vision of Judgment

## I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:  
His keys were rusty, and the lock was  
dull,  
So little trouble had been given of late;  
Not that the place by any means was  
full,  
But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight"  
The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger,  
pull,  
And "a pull all together", as they say  
At sea—which drew most souls another  
way.

## II

The angels all were singing out of tune,  
And hoarse with having little else to  
do,  
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,  
Or curb a runaway young star or two,  
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon  
Broke out of bounds o'er the eternal  
blue,

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Splitting some planet with its playful tail  
As boats are sometimes by a wanton  
whale.

### III

The guardian seraphs had retired on  
high,  
Finding their charges past all care  
below;  
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the  
sky  
Save the recording angel's black bureau;  
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply  
With such rapidity of vice and woe,  
That he had stripp'd off both his wings  
in quills,  
-And yet was in arrear of human ills.

### IV

His business so augmented of late years,  
That he was forced, against his will no  
doubt  
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers),  
For some resource to turn himself about,  
And claim the help of his celestial peers,  
To aid him ere he should be quite worn  
out,  
By the increased demand for his remarks:  
Six angels and twelve saints were named  
his clerks.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## V

This was a handsome board—at least for  
heaven;  
And yet they had even then enough to  
do,  
So many conquerors' cars were daily  
driven,  
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;  
Each day too slew its thousands six or  
seven,  
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,  
They threw their pens down in divine  
disgust—  
The page was so besmear'd with blood  
and dust.

## VI

This by the way; 't is not mine to record  
What angels shrink from: even the  
very devil  
On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,  
So surfeited with the infernal revel:  
Though he himself had sharpen'd every  
sword,  
It almost quench'd his innate thirst of  
evil.  
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves  
insertion—  
'T is, that he has both generals in rever-  
sion.)

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

### VII

Let's skip a few short years of hollow  
peace,  
Which peopled earth no better, hell as  
wont,  
And heaven none—they form the tyrant's  
lease,  
With nothing but new names sub-  
scribed upon't:  
'Twill one day finish: meantime they  
increase,  
“With seven heads and ten horns”, and  
all in front,  
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours  
are born  
Less formidable in the head than horn.

### VIII

In the first year of freedom's second  
dawn  
Died George the Third; although no  
tyrant, one  
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense  
withdrawn  
Left him nor mental nor external sun:  
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from  
lawn,  
A worse king never left a realm un-  
done!

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

He died—but left his subjects still behind,  
One half as mad—and t' other no less blind.

### IX

He died!—his death made no great stir  
on earth;  
His burial made some pomp; there was  
profusion  
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great  
dearth  
Of aught but tears—save those shed by  
collusion.  
For these things may be bought at their  
true worth;  
Of elegy there was the due infusion—  
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks,  
and banners,  
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic man-  
ners,

### X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all  
The fools who flock'd to swell or see  
the show,  
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral  
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.  
There throbb'd not there a thought which  
pierced the pall;  
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid  
low,





# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XIII

“God save the king!” It is a large  
economy

In God to save the like; but if he will  
Be saving, all the better; for not one am

I  
Of those who think damnation better  
still:

I hardly know too if not quite alone am I  
In this small hope of bettering future ill  
By circumscribing, with some slight re-  
striction,

The eternity of hell’s hot jurisdiction.

## XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know  
’Tis blasphemous; I know one may be  
damn’d

For hoping no one else may e’er be so;

I know my catechism; I know we are  
cramm’d

With the best doctrines till we quite o’er-  
flow;

I know that all save England’s church  
have sham’d,

And that the other twice two hundred  
churches

And synagogues have made a damn’d  
bad purchase.



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

### XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,  
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er  
his eyes—  
At which Saint Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd  
his nose:  
"Saint porter," said the angel, "prithee  
rise!"  
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as  
glows  
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly  
dyes;  
To which the Saint replied, "Well, what's  
the matter?  
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?"

### XVIII

"No," quoth the cherub; "George the  
Third is dead."  
"And who is George the Third?" re-  
plied the apostle:  
"*What George? what Third?*" "The  
king of England," said  
The angel. "Well! he won't find kings  
to jostle  
Him on his way; but does he wear his  
head?  
Because the last we saw here had a  
tussle,



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of, Saint Bartholomew, which makes his  
cowl  
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd  
his sin,  
So as to make a martyr, never sped  
Better than did this weak and wooden  
head.

### XXI

“But had it come up here upon its  
shoulders,  
There would have been a different tale  
to tell:  
The fellow-feeling in the saints beholders  
Seems to have acted on them like a  
spell;  
And so this very foolish head heaven  
solders  
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,  
And seems the custom here to overthrow  
Whatever has been wisely done below.”

### XXII

The angel answer'd, “Peter! do not  
pout:  
The king who comes has head and all  
entire,  
And never knew much what it was  
about—  
He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;

Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved

Eternal wrath on his immortal face,

And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

### XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate

Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,

With such a glance of supernatural hate,

As made St. Peter wish himself within;

He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,

And sweated through his apostolic skin:

Of course his perspiration was but ichor,

Or some such other spiritual liquor.

### XXVI

The very cherubs huddled all together,

Like birds when soars the falcon; and

they felt

A tingling to the tip of every feather,

And form'd a circle like Orion's belt

Around their poor old charge; who scarce

knew whither

His guards had led him, though they

gently dealt

With royal manes (for by many stories,

And true, we learn the angels all are Tories).



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

### XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate  
flew

Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges  
Flung over space an universal hue

Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges  
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and  
made a new

Aurora borealis spread its fringes  
O'er the North Pole; the same seen,  
when ice-bound,

By Captain Parry's crew, in "Melville's  
Sound".

### XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued  
beaming

A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,  
Radiant with glory, like a banner stream-  
ing

Victorious from some world-o'erthrow-  
ing fight:

My poor comparisons must needs be  
teeming

With earthly likenesses, for here the  
night

Of clay obscures our best conceptions,  
saving

Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey rav-  
ing.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XXIX

'Twas the archangel Michael: all men  
know  
The make of angels and archangels,  
since  
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to  
show,  
From the fiends' leader to the angels'  
prince;  
There also are some altar-pieces, though  
I really can't say that they much evince  
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;  
But let the connoisseurs explain *their*  
merits.

## XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;  
A goodly work of him from whom all  
glory  
And good arise; the portal pass'd—he  
stood;  
Before him the young cherubs and  
saints hoary—  
(I say *young*, begging to be understood  
By looks, not years; and should be  
very sorry  
To state, they were not older than St.  
Peter,  
But merely that they seem'd a little  
sweeter).

## *THE VISION OF JUDGMENT*

### XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down  
before

That arch-angelic hierarch, the first  
Of essences angelical, who wore

The aspect of a god; but this ne'er  
nursed

Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose  
core

No thought, save for his Master's service,  
durst

Intrude, however glorified and high;  
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

### XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—

They knew each other both for good  
and ill;

Such was their power, that neither could  
forget

His former friend and future foe; but  
still

There was a high, immortal, proud regret

In either's eye, as if 'twere less their  
will

Than destiny to make the eternal years  
Their date of war, and their "champ clos"  
the spheres.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we  
know

From Job, that Satan hath the power  
to pay

A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;

And that "the sons of God", like those  
of clay,

Must keep him company; and we might  
show

From the same book, in how polite a  
way

The dialogue is held between the Powers  
Of Good and Evil—but 't would take up  
hours.

## XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,

To prove with Hebrew and with Ara-  
bic,

If Job be allegory or a fact,

But a true narrative; and thus I  
pick

From out the whole but such and such  
an act

As sets aside the slightest thought of  
trick.

'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,  
And accurate as any other vision.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before  
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresh-  
olds is  
The place where Death's grand cause is  
argued o'er,  
And souls despatch'd to that world or  
to this;  
And therefore Michael and the other wore  
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,  
Yet still between his Darkness and his  
Brightness  
There pass'd a mutual glance of great  
politeness.

## XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern  
beau,  
But with a graceful oriental bend,  
Pressing one radiant arm just where be-  
low  
The heart in good men is supposed to  
tend;  
He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,  
But kindly; Satan met his ancient  
friend  
With more hauteur, as might an old  
Castilian  
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow  
An instant; and then raising it, he  
stood  
In act to assert his right or wrong, and  
show  
Cause why King George by no means  
could or should  
Make out a case to be exempt from woe  
Eternal, more than other kings, endued  
With better sense and hearts, whom his-  
tory mentions,  
Who long have "paved hell with their  
good intentions".

## XXXVIII

Michael began: "What wouldst thou  
with this man,  
Now dead, and brought before the Lord?  
What ill  
Hath he wrought since his mortal race  
began,  
That thou canst claim him? Speak!  
and do thy will,  
If it be just: if in this earthly span  
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil  
His duties as a king and mortal, say,  
And he is thine; if not, let him have  
way."

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

### XXXIX

“Michael!” replied the Prince of Air,  
“even here,  
Before the Gate of him thou servest,  
must  
I claim my subject: and will make ap-  
pear  
That as he was my worshipper in dust,  
So shall he be in spirit, although dear  
To thee and thine, because nor wine  
nor lust  
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the  
throne  
He reign’d o’er millions to serve me  
alone.

### XL

“Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it  
was,  
*Once, more* thy master’s: but I triumph  
not  
In this poor planet’s conquest; nor, alas!  
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:  
With all the myriads of bright worlds  
which pass  
In worship round him, he may have  
forgot  
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:  
I think few worth damnation save their  
kings,—

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## XLI

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to  
Assert my right as lord; and even had  
I such an inclination, ’twere (as you  
Well know) superfluous; they are  
grown so bad,  
That hell has nothing better left to do  
Than leave them to themselves: so  
much more mad  
And evil by their own internal curse,  
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I  
worse.

## XLII

“Look to the earth, I said, and say  
again:  
When this old, blind, mad, helpless,  
weak, poor worm  
Began in youth’s first bloom and flush  
to reign,  
The world and he both wore a different  
form,  
And much of earth and all the watery  
plain  
Of ocean call’d him king: through  
many a storm  
His isles had floated on the abyss of  
time;  
For the rough virtues chose them for  
their clime.





## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Take the worst pupil; and produce a  
reign  
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd  
with the slain.

### XLV

"He ever warr'd with freedom and the  
free:  
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign  
foes,  
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"  
Found George the Third their first op-  
ponent. Whose  
History was ever stain'd as his will be  
With national and individual woes?  
I grant his household abstinence; I grant  
His neutral virtues, which most mon-  
archs want:

### XLVI

"I know he was a constant consort; own  
He was a decent sire, and middling  
lord.  
All this is much, and most upon a  
throne;  
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,  
Is more than at an anchorite's supper  
shown.  
I grant him all the kindest can accord;



## THE FASION OF JUDGMENT

Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter!  
Cold

Must be your souls, if you have not  
abhorr'd

The foe to Catholic participation  
In all the license of a Christian nation.

### XLIX

"True! he allow'd them to pray God:  
but as

A consequence of prayer, refused the law  
Which would have placed them upon the  
same base

With those who did not hold the saints  
in awe."

But here Saint Peter started from his  
place,

And cried, "You may the prisoner  
withdraw:

Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this  
Guelph,

While I am guard, may I be damn'd  
myself!

### L

"Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange  
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)  
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range  
The azure fields of heaven, of that be  
sure!"

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

"Saint!" replied Satan, "you do well to  
    avenge  
The wrongs he made your satellites  
    endure;  
And if to this exchange you should be  
    given,  
I'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to  
    heaven."

### LI

Here Michael interposed: "Good saint!  
    and devil!  
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun dis-  
    cretion.  
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more  
    civil;  
Satan! excuse this warmth of his ex-  
    pression,  
And condescension to the vulgar's level:  
    Even saints sometimes forget them-  
    selves in session.  
Have you got more to say?"—"No."—"If  
    you please,  
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses."

### LII

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy  
    hand,  
Which stirr'd with its electric qualities

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Clouds farther off than we can understand,

Although we find him sometimes in our skies;

Infernal thunder shook both sea and land

In all the planets, and hell's batteries  
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions

As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

### LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls

As have the privilege of their damnation

Extended far beyond the mere controls

Of worlds past, present, or to come;  
no station

Is theirs particularly in the rolls

Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination

Or business carries them in search of game,

They may range freely—being damn'd the same.

### LIV

They are proud of this—as very well they may,

It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Stuck in their loins; or like to an "entée"  
Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.  
I borrow my comparisons from clay,  
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits  
be  
Offended with such base low likenesses;  
We know their posts are nobler far than  
these.

### LV

When the great signal ran from heaven  
to hell—  
About ten million times the distance  
reckon'd  
From our sun to its earth, as we can  
tell  
How much time it takes up, even to a  
second,  
For every ray that travels to dispel  
The fogs of London, through which,  
dimly beacon'd,  
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a  
year,  
If that the *summer* is not too severe:—

### LVI

I say that I can tell—'t was half a minute:  
I know the solar beams take up more  
time

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

But, pack'd up for their journey, they  
begin it;

But then their telegraph is less sub-  
lime,

And if they ran a race, they would not  
win it

'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their  
own clime.

The sun takes up some years for every  
ray

To reach its goal—the devil not half a  
day.

### LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size  
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd  
(I've seen a something like it in the skies

In the *Ægean*, e'er a squall); it near'd,  
And, growing bigger, took another guise;

Like an aerial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,  
Or *was* steer'd (I am doubtful of the  
grammar

Of the last phrase, which makes the  
stanza stammer;—

### LVIII

But take your choice); and then it grew  
a cloud;

And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a  
crowd  
Of locusts numerous as the heavens  
saw these;  
They shadow'd with their myriads space;  
their loud  
And varied cries were like those of wild  
geese  
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),  
And realized the phrase of "hell broke  
loose".

### LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John  
Bull,  
Who damn'd away his eyes as hereto-  
fore:  
There Paddy brogued "By Jasus!"—  
"What's your wull?"  
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the  
French ghost swore  
In certain terms I sha'n't translate in  
full,  
As the first coachman will; and 'midst  
the war,  
The voice of Jonathan was heard to  
express,  
"Our president is going to war, I  
guess."

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch,  
and Dane;

In short, an universal shoal of shades,  
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,  
Of all climes and professions, years and  
trades,

Ready to swear against the good king's  
reign,

Bitter as clubs in cards are against  
spade:

All summon'd by this grand "subpœna",  
to

Try if kings mayn't be damned like me  
or you.

## LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first  
grew pale,

As angels can; next, like Italian twi-  
light,

He turn'd all colours—as a peacock's tail,  
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic  
skylight

In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,  
Or distant lightning on the horizon by  
night,

Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review  
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and  
blue.

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

## LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan:

“Why—

My good old friend, for such I deem  
you, though

Our different parties make us fight so  
shy,

I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;  
Our difference is *political*, and I

Trust that, whatever may occur below.  
You know my great respect for you: and  
this

Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

## LXIII

“Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse  
My call for witnesses? I did not mean  
That you should half of earth and hell  
produce;

'Tis even superfluous, since two honest,  
clean,

True testimonies are enough: we lose

Our time, nay, our eternity, between  
The accusation and defence: if we  
Hear both, 't will stretch our immortality.”

## LXIV

Satan replied, “To me the matter is

Indifferent, in a personal point of view:

# THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

can have fifty better souls than this  
With far less trouble than we have  
gone through  
Already; and I merely argued his  
Late majesty of Britain's case with you  
Upon a point of form: you may dispose  
Of him; I've kings enough below, God  
knows!"

## LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd "mul-  
tifaced"  
By multo-scribbling Southey). "Then  
we'll call  
One or two persons of the myriads placed  
Around our congress, and dispense with  
all  
The rest," quoth Michael: "Who may be  
so graced  
As to speak first? there's choice enough  
—who shall  
It be?" Then Satan answer'd, "There  
are many;  
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well  
as any."

## LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite  
Upon the instant started from the  
throng,

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;  
For all the fashions of the fleshstick  
long  
By people in the next world; where unite  
All the costumes since Adam's, right or  
wrong,  
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,  
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

### LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds  
Assembled, and exclaim'd, "My friends  
of all  
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst  
these clouds;  
So let's to business: why this general  
call?  
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,  
And 'tis for an election that they bawl,  
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!  
Saint Peter, may I count upon your  
vote?"

### LXVIII

"Sir," replied Michael, you mistake;  
these things  
Are of a former life, and what we do  
Above is more august; to judge of kings  
Is the tribunal met: so now you know."

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

"Then I presume those gentlemen with  
wings,"  
Said Wilkes, "are cherubs; and that  
soul below  
Looks much like George the Third, but  
to my mind  
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?"

### LXIX

"He is what you behold him, and his  
doom  
Depends upon his deeds," the Angel  
said.  
"If you have aught to arraign in him,  
the tomb  
Gives license to the humblest beggar's  
head  
To lift itself against the loftiest."—  
"Some,"  
Said Wilkes, "don't wait to see them  
laid in lead,  
For such a liberty—and I, for one,  
Have told them what I thought beneath  
the sun."

### LXX

"Above the sun repeat, then, what thou  
hast  
To urge against him," said the Arch-  
angel. "Why,"

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Replied the spirit, "since old scores are  
past,

Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.  
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,  
With all his Lords and Commons: in  
the sky

I don't like ripping up old stories, since  
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

### LXXI

"Foolish, no doubt, and \wicked, to  
oppress

A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;  
But then I blame the man himself much  
less

Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be  
unwilling

To see him punish'd here for their excess,  
Since they were both damn'd long ago,  
and still in

Their place below: for me, I have for-  
given,

And vote his 'habeas corpus' into heaven."

### LXXII

"Wilkes," said the Devil, "I understand  
all this;

You turn'd to half a courtier ere you  
died,

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Art thou to think it would not be amiss

To turn a whole to one on the other side  
On Church's empty as for yet that *his*

Religion is but a, what's else beside,  
He would be so bright in it: you've lost  
your labour.

For at the best he will but be your  
neighbour.

### LXXXIII

"However I knew what to think of it.

When I beheld you in your jesting way,  
Flitting and whispering round about the  
spit

Where Balaam, upon duty for the day,  
With Fox's Lord was fasting: William  
Pitt,

His pupil: I knew what to think, I  
say:

That fellow even in hell breeds farther  
ills:

I'll have him gagged - 't was one of his  
own bills.

### LXXXIV

"Call Junius!" From the crowd a  
shadow stalk'd,

And at the name there was a general  
squeeze,



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd  
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,  
But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to  
be balk'd,  
As we shall see), and jostled hands and  
knees,  
Like wind compress'd and pent within a  
bladder,  
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

### LXXV

The shadow came—a tall, thin, gray-  
hair'd figure,  
That look'd as it had been a shade on  
earth;  
Quick in its motions, with an air of  
vigour,  
But nought to mark its breeding or its  
birth:  
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,  
With now an air of gloom, or savage  
mirth;  
But as you gazed upon its features, they  
Changed every instant—to *what*, none  
could say.

### LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less  
Could they distinguish whose the fea-  
tures were;

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to  
guess;  
They varied like a dream—now here,  
now there;  
And several people swore from out the  
press,  
They knew him perfectly; and one  
could swear  
He was his father: upon which another  
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's  
brother:

### LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,  
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,  
A nabob, a man-midwife: but the wight  
Mysterious changed his countenance at  
least  
As oft as they their minds: though in  
full sight  
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;  
The man was a phantasmagoria in  
Himself—he was so volatile and thin.

### LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounced  
him *one*,  
Presto! his face changed, and he was  
another;

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And when that change was hardly well  
put on,  
It varied, till I don't think his own  
mother  
(If that he had a mother) would her son  
Have known, he shifted so from one to  
t' other;  
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,  
At this epistolary "Iron Mask".

### LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would  
seem—  
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely  
says  
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem  
That he was not even *one*; now many  
rays  
Were flashing round him; and now a  
thick steam  
Hid him from sight—like fogs on Lon-  
don days:  
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to  
people's fancies,  
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

### LXXX

I've an hypothesis—'t is quite my own;  
I never let it out till now, for fear

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of doing people harm about the throne,  
And injuring some minister or peer,  
On whom the stigma might perhaps be  
blown;

It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!  
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to  
call  
Was *really, truly*, nobody at all.

### LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be  
Written without hands, since we daily  
view

Them written without heads; and books,  
we see,

Are fill'd as well without the latter too:  
And really till we fix on somebody

For certain sure to claim them as his  
due,

Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will  
bother

The world to say if *there* be mouth or  
author.

### LXXXII

"And who and what art thou?" the  
Archangel said.

"For *that* you may consult my title-  
page,"

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:

"If I have kept my secret half an age,  
I scarce shall tell it now."—"Canst thou  
upbraid,"

Continued Michael, "George Rex, or  
allege

Aught further?" Junius answer'd, "You  
had better

First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

### LXXXIII

"My charges upon record will outlast  
The brass of both his epitaph and  
tomb."

"Repent'st thou not," said Michael, "of  
some past

Exaggeration? something which may  
doom

Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou  
wast

Too bitter—is it not so?—in thy gloom  
Of passion?"—"Passion!" cried the phan-  
tom dim,

"I loved my country, and I hated him.

### LXXXIV

"What I have written, I have written: let  
The rest be on his head or mine!" So  
spoke

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

• Old "Nominis Umbra"; and while speaking yet,

Away he melted in celestial smoke.

Then Satan said to Michael, "Don't forget

To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,

And Franklin;"—but at this time there was heard

A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.

### LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid

Of cherubim appointed to that post, The devil Asmodeus to the circle made

His way, and look'd as if his journey cost Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,

"What's this?" cried Michael; "why, 'tis not a ghost?"

"I know it," quoth the incubus; "but he Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

### LXXXVI

"Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd My left wing, he's so heavy; one would think

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Some of his works about his neck were  
chain'd.  
But to the point; while hovering o'er  
the brink  
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),  
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,  
And stooping, caught this fellow at a  
libel—  
No less on history than the Holy Bible.

### LXXXVII

"The former is the devil's scripture, and  
The latter yours, good Michael: so the  
affair  
Belongs to all of us, you understand.  
I snatch'd him up just as you see him  
there,  
And brought him off for sentence out of  
hand:  
I've scarcely been ten minutes in the  
air—  
At least a quarter it can hardly be:  
I dare say that his wife is still at tea."

### LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, "I know this man of  
old,  
And have expected him for some time  
here;

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

A *poet* following you still craves to hold,  
Ye mortal eyes, in his petty sphere;  
But surely it is not worth while to fold  
Such truth to his poor wing, Asmodeus  
dears;  
We had the poor watch safe (without  
being lost)  
With cartridges coming of his own accord.

### LXXXIX

"But ~~see~~ he's here, let's see what he  
has done."

"Done!" cried Asmodeus, "he anticipates

The very business you are now upon,  
And scribbles as if head clerk to the  
Fates.

Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,  
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's,  
prates?"

"Let's hear," quoth Michael, "what he  
has to say;  
You know we're bound to that in every  
way."

### XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience,  
which  
By no means often was his case below,



## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Began to cough, and hawk, and hē<sup>u</sup>m  
and pitch

His voice into that awful note of woe  
To all unhappy hearers within reach  
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in  
flow;

But stuck fast with his first hexameter,  
Not one of all whose gouty feet would  
stir.

### XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls <sup>could</sup> be  
spurr'd

Into recitative, in great dismay,  
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard  
To murmur loudly through their long  
array;

And Michael rose ere he could get a word  
Of all his founder'd verses under way,  
And cried, "For God's sake, stop, my  
friend! 't were best—

*Non Di, non homines*—you know the rest."

### XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the  
throng,

Which seem'd to hold all verse in detes-  
tation;

The angels had of course enough of song  
When upon service; and the generation

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not  
long

Before, to profit by a new occasion;  
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd,  
"What! what!

*Pyc* come again? No more—no more of  
that!"

### XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough  
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,  
When Castlereagh has been up long  
enough

(Before he was first minister of state,  
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried  
"Off, off!"

As at a farce; till, grown quite desper-  
ate,  
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose  
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

### XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;  
A good deal like a vulture in the  
face,  
With a hook nose and a hawk's eye,  
which gave  
A smart and sharper-looking sort of  
grace

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

To his whole aspect, which, though rather  
grave,

Was by no means so ugly as his case;  
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,  
Quite a poetic felony "*de se*".

### xcv

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd  
the noise

With one still greater, as is yet the  
mode

On earth besides; except some grumbling  
voice,

Which now and then will make a  
slight inroad

Upon decorous silence, few will twice

Lift up their lungs when fairly over-  
crow'd;

And now the bard could plead his own  
bad cause,

With all the attitudes of self-applause.

### xcvi

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,

He meant no harm in scribbling; 't was  
his way

Upon all topics; 't was, besides, his bread,

Of which he butter'd both sides; 't would  
delay

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Too long the assembly (he was pleas'd to  
dread),  
And take up rather more time than a  
day,  
To name his works—he would but cite a  
few—  
“Wat Tyler”—“Rhymes on Blenheim”—  
“Waterloo”.

### xcvii

He had written praises of a regicide;  
He had written praises of all kings  
whatever;  
He had written for republics far and  
wide,  
And then against them bitterer than  
ever;  
For pantisocracy he once had cried  
Aloud—a scheme less moral than 't was  
clever;  
Then grew a hearty anti-Jacobin—  
Had turn'd his coat—and would have  
turn'd his skin.

### xcviii

He had sung against all battles, and  
again  
In their high praise and glory; he had  
call'd

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Reviewing "the ungentle craft", and  
then

Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd—  
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men  
By whom his muse and morals had  
been maul'd:

He had written much blank verse, and  
blanker prose,  
And more of both than anybody knows.

### XCIX

He had written Wesley's life:—here turn-  
ing round

To Satan, "Sir, I'm ready to write  
yours,

In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,  
With notes and preface, all that most  
allures

The pious purchaser; and there's no  
ground

For fear, for I can choose my own  
reviewers:

So let me have the proper documents,  
That I may add you to my other saints."

### C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. "Well, if  
you,

With amiable modesty, decline

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

My offer, what says Michael? There are  
few

Whose memoirs could be render'd more  
divine.

Mine is a pen of all work; not so new

As it was once, but I would make you shine  
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my  
own

Has more of brass in it, and is as well  
blown.

### CI

"But talking about trumpets, here's my  
Vision!

Now you shall judge, all people; yes,  
you shall

Judge with my judgment, and by my  
decision

Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.

I settle all these things by intuition,

Times present, past, to come, heaven,  
hell, and all,

Like King Alfonso. When I thus see  
double,

I save the Deity some worlds of trouble."

### CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no  
Persuasion on the part of devils, or  
saints,

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so  
He read the first three lines of the  
contents;

But at the fourth, the whole spiritual  
show

Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,  
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they  
sprang,  
Like lightning, off from his "melodious  
twang".

### CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:

The angels stopp'd their ears and plied  
their pinions;

The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down  
to hell;

The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own  
dominions—

(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,

And I leave every man to his opinions);

Michael took refuge in his trump—but,  
lo!

His teeth were set on edge, he could not  
blow!

### CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known  
For an impetuous saint, upraised his  
keys,

## THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And at the fifth line knock'd the poet  
down;  
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at  
ease,  
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;  
A different web being by the Destinies  
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath,  
whene'er  
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom—like his  
works,  
But soon rose to the surface—like him-  
self;  
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like  
corks,  
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,  
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,  
It may be, still, like dull books on a  
shelf,  
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life"  
or "Vision",  
As Welborn says—"the devil turn'd pre-  
cisian".

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion  
Of this true dream, the telescope is  
gone



## *THE VISION OF JUDGMENT*

Which kept my optics free from all  
delusion,  
And show'd me what I in my turn  
have shown;  
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,  
Was, that King George slipp'd into  
heaven for one;  
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,  
I left him practising the hundredth psalm

## The Destruction of Sennacherib



The Assyrian came down like the wolf on  
the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple  
and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like  
stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep  
Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer  
is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset  
were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn  
hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay wither'd  
and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings  
on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as  
he pass'd;

## SENNACHERIB †

And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly  
and chill,  
And their hearts but once heav'd, and for  
ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril  
all wide,  
But through it there roll'd not the breath  
of his pride:  
And the foam of his gasping lay white  
on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating  
surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and  
pale,  
With the dew on his brow and the rust  
on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners  
alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in  
their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of  
Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote  
by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of  
the Lord!

Ode to  
Napoleon  
Buonaparte



'Tis done—but yesterday a King!  
And aen'd with Kings to strive—  
And now thou art a nameless thing:  
So abject—yet alive!  
Is this the man of thousand thrones,  
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,  
And can he thus survive?  
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,  
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind  
Who bow'd so low the knee?  
By gazing on thyself grown blind,  
Thou taught'st the rest to see.  
With might unquestion'd, — power to  
save,—  
Thine only gift hath been the grave,  
To those that worshipp'd thee;  
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess  
Ambition's less than littleness!

## ODE TO

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach  
To after-warriors more,  
Than high Philosophy can preach,  
And vainly preach'd before.  
That spell upon the minds of men  
Breaks never to unite again,  
That led them to adore  
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,  
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,  
The rapture of the strife—  
The earthquake voice of Victory,  
To thee the breath of life;  
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway  
Which man seem'd made but to obey,  
Wherewith renown was rife—  
All quell'd!—Dark Spirit! what must be  
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!  
The Victor overthrown!  
The Arbiter of others' fate  
A Suppliant for his own!  
Is it some yet imperial hope,  
That with such change can calmly cope?  
Or dread of death alone?  
To die a prince—or live a slave—  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

## *NAPOLÉON BUONAPARTE*

He who of old would rend the oak,  
Dream'd not of the rebound:  
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke—  
Alone—how look'd he round?  
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,  
An equal deed has done at length,  
And darker fate hast found:  
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;  
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman, when his burning heart  
Was slaked with blood of Rome,  
Threw down the dagger—dared depart  
In savage grandeur, home—  
He dared depart in utter scorn  
Of men that such a yoke had borne,  
Yet left him such a doom!  
His only glory was that hour  
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway  
Had lost its quickening spell,  
Cast crowns for rosaries away,  
An empire for a cell;  
A strict accountant of his beads,  
A subtle disputant on creeds,  
His dotage trifled well:  
Yet better had he neither known  
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

## ODE TO

But thou—from thy reluctant hand  
The thunderbolt is wrung—  
Too late thou leav'st the high command  
To which thy weakness clung;  
All Evil Spirit as thou art,  
It is enough to grieve the heart  
To see thine own unstrung;  
To think that God's fair world hath been  
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,  
Who thus can hoard his own!  
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,  
And thank'd him for a throne!  
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,  
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear  
In humblest guise have shown.  
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind  
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,  
Nor written thus in vain—  
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,  
Or deepen every stain:  
If thou hadst died as honour dies,  
Some new Napoleon might arise,  
To shame the world again—  
But who would soar the solar height,  
To set in such a starless night?

## NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust  
Is vile as vulgar clay;  
Thy scales, Mortality! are just  
To all that pass away:  
But yet methought the living great  
Some higher sparks should animate,  
To dazzle and dismay:  
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make  
mirth  
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,  
Thy still imperial bride;  
How bears her breast the torturing hour?  
Still clings she to thy side?  
Must she too bend, must she too share  
Thy late repentance, long despair,  
Thou throneless Homicide?  
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem;  
'Tis worth thy vanish'd diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,  
And gaze upon the sea;  
That element may meet thy smile—  
It ne'er was ruled by thee!  
Or trace with thine all idle hand,  
In loitering mood upon the sand,  
That Earth is now as free!  
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now  
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.



## ODE TO

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage  
What thoughts will there be thine,  
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?  
But one—The “world *was* mine!”  
Unless, like he of Babylon,  
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,  
Life will not long confine  
That spirit pour'd so widely forth—  
So long obey'd—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,  
Wilt thou withstand the shock?  
And share with him, the unforgiven,  
His vulture and his rock?  
Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,  
And that last act, though not thy worst,  
The very Fiend's arch mock;  
He in his fall preserved his pride,  
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

There was a day—there was an hour,  
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—  
When that immeasurable power  
Unsated to resign  
Had been an act of purer fame,  
Than gathers round Marengo's name,  
And gilded thy decline,  
Through the long twilight of all time,  
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

## *NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE*

But thou forsooth must be a king,  
And don the purple vest,  
As if that foolish robe could wring  
Remembrance from thy breast.  
Where is that faded garment? where  
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,  
The star—the string—the crest?  
Vain froward child of empire! say,  
Are all thy playthings snatch'd away?

Where may the wearied eye repose,  
When gazing on the Great;  
Where neither guilty glory glows,  
Nor despicable state?  
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—  
The Cincinnatus of the West,  
Whom envy dared not hate,  
Bequeath the name of Washington,  
To make man blush there was but one!

# Ode from the French



## I

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!  
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;  
There 't was shed, but is not sunk—  
Rising from each gory trunk,  
Like the water-spout from ocean,  
With a strong and growing motion—  
It soars, and mingles in the air,  
With that of lost Labedoyère—  
With that of him whose honour'd grave  
Contains the "bravest of the brave".  
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,  
But shall return to whence it rose;  
When 'tis full 't will burst asunder—  
Never yet was heard such thunder,  
As then shall shake the world with  
wonder—  
Never yet was seen such lightning  
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!  
Like the Wormwood Star foretold  
By the sainted Seer of old,  
Show'ring down a fiery flood,  
Turning rivers into blood.

# ODE, FROM THE FRENCH

## II

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,  
Vanquishers of Waterloo!  
When the soldier citizen  
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men—  
Save in deeds that led them on  
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son—  
Who, of all the despots banded,  
With that youthful chief competed?  
Who could boast o'er France defeated,  
Till lone Tyranny commanded?  
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,  
The Hero sunk into the King?  
Then he fell:—so perish all,  
Who would men by man enthrall!

## III

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!  
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;  
Better hadst thou still been leading  
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,  
Than sold thyself to death and shame  
For a meanly royal name;  
Such as he of Naples wears,  
Who thy blood-bought title bears.  
Little didst thou deem, when dashing  
On thy war-horse through the ranks,  
Like a stream which burst its banks,  
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,

## ODE FROM THE FRENCH

Shone and shiver'd fast around thee—  
Of the fate at last which found thee,  
Was that haughty plume laid low  
By a slave's dishonest blow?  
Once—as the Moon sways o'er the

    tide,  
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;  
Through the smoke-created night  
Of the black and sulphurous fight,  
The soldier raised his seeking eye  
To catch that crest's ascendancy—  
And as it onward rolling rose,    t  
So moved his heart upon our foes.  
There, where death's brief pang was  
    quickest,

And the battle's wreck lay thickest,  
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner  
Of the eagle's burning crest—  
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,  
    *Who* could then her wing arrest—  
Victory beaming from her breast?)  
While the broken line enlarging  
Fell, or fled along the plain;  
There be sure was Murat charging!  
There he ne'er shall charge again!

### IV

O'er glories gone the invaders march,  
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch—

## ODE FROM THE FRENCH

But let Freedom rejoice,  
With her heart in her voice;  
But, her hand on her sword,  
Doubly shall she be adored;  
France hath twice too well been taught  
The "moral lesson" dearly bought—  
Her safety sits not on a throne,  
With Capet or Napoleon!  
But in equal rights and laws,  
Hearts and hands in one great cause—  
Freedom, such as God hath given  
Unto all beneath his heaven,  
With their breath, and from their birth,  
Though Guilt would sweep it from the  
earth;  
With a fierce and lavish hand  
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;  
Pouring nations' blood like water,  
In imperial seas of slaughter!

v

But the heart and the mind,  
And the voice of mankind,  
Shall arise in communion—  
And who shall resist that proud union?  
The time is past when swords subdued—  
Man may die—the soul's renew'd:  
Even in this low world of care  
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;

## *ODE FROM THE FRENCH*

Millions breathe but to inherit  
Her for ever bounding spirit—  
When once more her hosts assemble,  
Tyrants shall believe and tremble—  
Smile they at this idle threat?  
Crimson tears will follow yet.

# Napoléon



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S  
PILGRIMAGE"

The fool of false dominion—and a kind  
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old  
With steps unequal; for the Roman's  
mind

Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,  
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment  
cold,

And an immortal instinct which re-  
deem'd

The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,  
Alcides with a distaff now he seem'd  
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he  
beam'd,

And came—and saw—and conquer'd!  
But the man

Who would have tamed his eagles down  
to flee,

Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,  
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,



## NAPOLEON

With a deaf heart which never seem'd  
to be  
A listener to itself, was strangely  
fram'd;  
With but one weakest weakness—  
vanity,  
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—  
At what? Can he avouch—or answer  
what he claim'd?

And would be all or nothing—nor could  
wait  
For the sure grave to level him; few  
years  
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,  
On whom we tread: For *this* the con-  
queror rears  
The arch of triumph! and for this the  
tears  
And blood of earth flow on as they  
have flow'd,  
An universal deluge, which appears  
Without an ark for wretched man's  
abode,  
And ebbs but to reflow!—Renew thy rain-  
bow, God!

. . . . .  
There sunk the greatest, nor the worst  
of men,  
Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,

## NAPOLEON

One moment of the mightiest, and again  
O, little objects with like firmness fixt;  
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been  
betwixt,

Thy throne had still been thine, or never  
been;

For daring made thy rise as fall: thou  
seek'st

Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,  
And shake again the world, the Thunderer  
of the scene!

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,  
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is  
a fire

And motion of the soul which will not  
dwell

In its own narrow being but aspire  
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-  
more,

Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,  
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever  
bore.

This makes the madmen who have made  
men mad

By their contagion! Conquerors and  
Kings,

## NAPOLEON

Founders of sects and systems, to whom  
add  
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet  
things  
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret  
springs,  
And are themselves the fools to those  
they fool;  
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings  
Are theirs! One breast laid open were  
a school  
Which would unteach mankind, the lust  
to shine or rule.

# Waterloo

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S  
PILGRIMAGE"

Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's  
dust!  
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred  
below!  
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal  
bust?  
Nor column trophied for triumphal  
show?  
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler  
so,  
As the ground was before, thus let it  
be;—  
How that red rain hath made the harvest  
grow!  
And is this all the world has gain'd by  
thee,  
Thou first and last of fields! king-making  
Victory?

There was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then

## WATERLOO

Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and  
bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and  
brave men;  
A thousand hearts beat happily; and  
when  
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake  
again,  
And all went merry as a marriage-  
bell;  
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like  
a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the  
wind,  
Or the car rattling o'er the stony  
street;  
On with the dance! let joy be uncon-  
fined;  
No sleep till morn, when Youth and  
Pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing Hours with flying  
feet—  
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in  
once more  
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;  
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!  
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's  
opening roar!

## WATERLOO

Within a window'd niche of that high  
hall  
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did  
hear  
That sound the first amidst the festival,  
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;  
And when they smiled because he deem'd  
it near,  
His heart more truly knew that peal too  
well  
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody  
bier,  
And roused the vengeance blood alone  
could quell;  
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost  
fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and  
fro,  
And gathering tears, and tremblings of  
distress,  
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour  
ago  
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;  
And there were sudden partings, such as  
press  
The life from out young hearts, and  
choking sighs

# WATERLOO

Which ne'er might be repeated; who  
could guess  
If ever more should meet those mutual  
eyes,  
Since upon night so sweet such awful  
morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste:  
the steed,

The mustering squadron, and the clatter-  
ing car,

Went pouring forward with impetuous  
speed,

And swiftly forming in the ranks of  
war;

And the deep thunder peal on peal  
afar;

And near, the beat of the alarming  
drum

Roused up the soldier's Youth and  
star;

While throng'd the hours with flying  
dumb,

Or whispering, with the  
foe! They come

And wild and high the Cameron's  
gathering" rose!  
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's  
hills

## WATERLOO

Have heard, and heard, too, have her  
Saxon foes:—  
How in the noon of night that pibroch  
thrills,  
Savage and shrill! But with the breath  
which fills  
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-  
taineers  
With the fierce native daring which in-  
stils  
The stirring memory of a thousand  
years,  
And Evans, Donald's fame rings in each  
clansman's ears!

And Ardennes waves above them her  
green leaves,  
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they  
pass,  
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!  
Ere evening to be trodden like the  
grass  
Which now beneath them, but above  
shall grow  
In its next verdure, when this fiery  
mass  
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,  
And burning with high hope, shall moulder  
cold and low.



## WATERLOO

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,  
The midnight brought the signal-sound  
of strife,

The morn the marshalling in arms,—the  
day

Battle's magnificently-stern array!

The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which  
when rent

The earth is cover'd thick with other  
clay,

Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd  
and pent,

Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red  
burial blent!

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps  
than mine:

Yet one I would select from that proud  
throng,

Partly because they blend me with his  
line,

And partly that I did his sire some  
wrong,

And partly that bright names will hallow  
song;

And his was of the bravest, and when  
shower'd

The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files  
along,

## WATERLOO

'Even where the thickest of war's tempest  
    lower'd,  
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine,  
    young, gallant Howard!

There have been tears and breaking  
    hearts for thee,  
And mine were nothing, had I such to  
    give;  
But when I stood beneath the fresh green  
    tree,  
Which diving waves where thou didst  
    cease to live,  
And saw around me the wide field re-  
    vive  
With fruits and fertile promise, and the  
    Spring  
Came forth her work of gladness to con-  
    trive,  
With all her reckless birds upon the  
    wing,  
I turn'd from all she brought to those she  
    could not bring.

Epitaph for  
William Pitt



With death doom'd to grapple,  
Beneath this cold slab, he  
Who lied in the Chapel  
Now lies in the Abbey.

## Vision of Belshazzar



The King was on his throne,  
The Satraps throng'd the hall;  
A thousand bright lamps shone  
O'er that high festival.  
A thousand cups of gold,  
In Judah deem'd divine—  
Jehovah's vessels hold  
The godless Heathen's wine.

In that same hour and hall,  
The fingers of a hand  
Came forth against the wall,  
And wrote as if on sand:  
The fingers of a man;—  
A solitary hand  
Along the letters ran,  
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,  
And bade no more rejoice;  
All bloodless wax'd his look,  
And tremulous his voice.

## VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

"Let the men of lore appear  
The wisest of the earth,  
And expound the words of fear,  
Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldea's seers are good,  
But here they have no skill;  
And the unknown letters stood  
Untold and awful still.  
And Babel's men of age  
Are wise and deep in lore,  
But now they were not sage,  
They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,  
A stranger and a youth,  
He heard the king's command,  
He saw that writing's truth,  
The lamps around were bright,  
The prophecy in view;  
He read it on that night,—  
The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,  
His kingdom pass'd away,  
He, in the balance weigh'd,  
Is light and worthless clay,  
The shroud his robe of state,  
His canopy the stone:  
The Mede is at his gate!  
The Persian on his throne!"

# Greece



FROM "THE LEADER"

Climb of the unforgotten brave!  
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave  
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!  
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,  
That this is all remains of thee?  
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:  
Say, is not this Thermopyke?  
These waters blue that round you lave,  
Oh servile offspring of the free—  
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?  
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!  
These scenes, their story not unknown,  
Arise, and make again your own;  
Snatch from the ashes of your sires  
The embers of their former fires;  
And he who in the strife expires  
Will add to theirs a name of fear  
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,  
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,  
They too will rather die than shame:

## GREECE

For Freedom's battle once begun,  
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son;  
Though baffled oft is ever won.  
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!  
Attest it many a deathless age!  
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,  
Have left a nameless pyramid,  
Thy heroes, though the general doom  
Hath swept the column from their tomb,  
A mightier monument command,  
The mountains of their native land!  
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye  
The graves of those that cannot die!  
'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,  
Each step from splendour to disgrace;  
Enough—no foreign foe could quell  
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;  
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way  
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

# The Prisoner of Chillon



Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou  
art,

For there thy habitation is the heart—  
The heart which love of thee alone can  
bind;  
And when thy sons to fetters are con-  
sign'd—

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless  
gloom,

Their country conquers with their mar-  
tyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every  
wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,

And thy sad floor an altar—for 't was  
trod,

Until his very steps have left a trace

Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a  
sod,

By Bonnivard!—May none those marks  
efface!

For they appeal from tyranny to God.



# THE PRISONER OF CHILION

## I

My hair is gray, but not with years,  
Nor grew it white  
In a single night,  
As men's have grown from sudden fears:  
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,  
But rusted with a vile repose,  
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,  
And mine has been the fate of those  
To whom the goodly earth and air  
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;  
But this was for my father's faith  
I suffer'd chains and courted death;  
For tenets he would not forsake;  
And for the same his lineal race  
In darkness found a dwelling-place;  
We were seven—who now are one,  
Six in youth, and one in age,  
Finish'd as they had begun,  
Proud of persecution's rage;  
One in fire, and two in field,  
Their belief with blood have seal'd;  
Dying as their father died,  
For the God their foes denied;  
Three were in a dungeon cast,  
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

# THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

## II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,  
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,  
There are seven columns, massy and  
gray,

Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,  
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,  
And through the crevice and the cleft  
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;  
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,  
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:

And in each pillar there is a ring,  
And in each ring there is a chain;  
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,  
With marks that will not wear away,  
Till I have done with this new day,  
Which now is painful to these eyes,  
Which have not seen the sun so rise  
For years—I cannot count them o'er,  
I lost their long and heavy score,  
When my last brother droop'd and died,  
And I lay living by his side.

## III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,  
And we were three—yet, each alone;  
We could not move a single pace,  
We could not see each other's face,

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

But with that pale and livid light  
That made us strangers in our sight:  
And thus together—yet apart,  
Fetter'd in hand, but joined in heart,  
'Twas still some solace in the dearth  
Of the pure elements of earth,  
To hearken to each other's speech,  
And each turn comforter to each  
With some new hope, or legend old,  
Or song heroically bold;  
But even these at length grew cold.  
Our voices took a dreary tone,  
An echo of the dungeon stone,  
    A grating sound—not full and free  
    As they of yore were wont to be:  
    It might be fancy—but to me  
They never sounded like our own.

### IV

I was the eldest of the three,  
And to uphold and cheer the rest  
I ought to do—and did my best—  
And each did well in his degree.  
The youngest, whom my father loved,  
Because our mother's brow was given  
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,  
For him my soul was sorely moved:  
And truly might it be distress'd  
To see such bird in such a nest;

# THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

For he was beautiful as day—

(When day was beautiful to me

As to young eagles, being free)—

A polar day, which will not see

A sunset till its summer's gone,

Its sleepless summer of long light,

The snow-clad offspring of the sun:

And thus he was as pure and bright,

And in his natural spirit gay,

With tears for nought but others' ills,

And then they flow'd like mountain rills,

Unless he could assuage the woe

Which he abhorr'd to view below.

## v

The other was as pure of mind,

But form'd to combat with his kind;

Strong in his frame, and of a mood

Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,

And perish'd in the foremost rank

With joy:—but not in chains to pine:

His spirit wither'd with their clank,

I saw it silently decline—

And so perchance in sooth did mine;

But yet I forced it on to cheer

Those relics of a home so dear.

He was a hunter of the hills,

Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;

To him this dungeon was a gulf,

And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.



## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I **H**ad I been by the mountain post  
To begg'd for water from the moat,  
That I might wash such an captive's face,  
There are still many a thousand years,  
Before you find what his fellow men  
Likewise suffer in such a den;  
But what have these to us or him?  
They saved not his heart or limb;  
My father's soul was of that mould  
Which in a palace had grown cold,  
And his freedom had been denied  
The range of the steep mountain's side;  
But why delay the truth?—he died.  
I saw, and could not hold his head,  
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—  
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,  
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.  
He died, and they unlock'd his chain,  
And begg'd for him a shallow grave  
Even from the cold earth of our cave.  
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay  
His corpse in dust whereon the day  
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,  
But then within my brain it wrought,  
That even in death his freeborn breast  
In such a dungeon could not rest.  
I might have spared my idle prayer—  
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there:  
The flat and turfless earth above  
The being we so much did love;

## THE PRISONER OF CHIWON

One on the earth, and one beneath—  
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:  
I took that hand which lay so still,  
Alas! my own was full as chill;  
I had not strength to stir, or strive,  
But felt that I was still alive—  
A frantic feeling, when we know  
That what we love shall ne'er be so.  
    I know not why  
    I could not die,  
I had no earthly hope but faith,  
And that forbade a selfish death.

### IX

What next befell me then and there  
I know not well—I never knew—  
First came the loss of light, and air,  
And then of darkness too:  
I had no thought, no feeling—none—  
Among the stones I stood a stone,  
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,  
As shrubless crags within the mist;  
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,  
It was not night—it was not day;  
It was not even the dungeon-light,  
So hateful to my heavy sight,  
But vacancy absorbing space,  
And fixedness—without a place;

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

There were no stars—no earth—no time—  
No check—no change—no good—no  
crime—

But silence, and a stirless breath  
Which neither was of life nor death;  
A sea of stagnant idleness,  
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

### X

A light broke in upon my brain,—  
It was the carol of a bird;  
It ceased, and then it came again,  
The sweetest song ear ever heard,  
And mine was thankful till my eyes  
Ran over with the glad surprise,  
~~And they that moment could not see~~  
I was the mate of misery;  
But then by dull degrees came back  
My senses to their wonted track;  
I saw the dungeon walls and floor  
Close slowly round me as before,  
I saw the glimmer of the sun  
Creeping as it before had done,  
But through the crevice where it came  
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,  
And tamer than upon the tree;  
A lovely bird, with azure wings,  
And song that said a thousand things,  
And seem'd to say them all for me!



## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I never saw its like before,  
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:  
It seem'd like me to want a mate,  
But was not half so desolate,  
And it was come to love me when  
None lived to love me so again,  
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,  
Had brought me back to feel and think.  
I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine,  
But knowing well captivity,

Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!  
Or if it were, in winged guise,  
A visitant from Paradise;  
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the  
while

Which made me both to weep and smile;  
I sometimes deem'd that it might be  
My brother's soul come down to me;  
But then at last away it flew,  
And then 't was mortal well I knew,  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone,—  
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone—as a solitary cloud,

A single cloud on a sunny day,  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear

When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

# THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

## XI

A kind of change came in my fate,  
My keepers grew compassionate;  
I know not what had made them so,  
They were inured to sights of woe,  
But so it was:—my broken chain  
With links unfasten'd did remain,  
And it was liberty to stride  
Along my cell from side to side,  
And up and down, and then athwart,  
And tread it over every part;  
And round the pillars one by one,  
Returning where my walk begun,  
Avoiding only, as I trod,  
My brothers' graves without a sod;  
For if I thought with heedless tread  
My step profaned their lowly bed,  
My breath came gaspingly and thick,  
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

## XII

I made a footing in the wall,  
It was not therefrom to escape,  
For I had buried one and all .  
Who loved me in a human shape;  
And the whole earth would henceforth be  
A wider prison unto me:  
No child—no sire—no kin had I,  
No partner in my misery;

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I thought of this, and I was glad,  
For thought of them had made me mad;  
But I was curious to ascend  
To my barr'd windows, and to bend  
Once more, upon the mountains high,  
The quiet of a loving eye.

### XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,  
They were not changed like me in frame;  
I saw their thousand years of snow  
On high—their wide long lake below,  
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;  
I heard the torrents leap and gush  
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;  
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,  
And whiter sails go skimming down;  
And then there was a little isle,  
Which in my very face did smile,

The only one in view;  
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,  
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,  
And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers grow-  
ing,

Of gentle breath and hue.  
The fish swam by the castle wall,  
And they seem'd joyous each and all;

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

The eagle rode the rising blast,  
He thought he never flew so fast  
As then to me he seem'd to fly,  
And then new tears came in my eye,  
And I felt troubled—and would fain  
I had not left my recent chain;  
And when I did descend again,  
The darkness of my dim abode  
Fell on me as a heavy load;  
It was as is a new-dug grave,  
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—  
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,  
Had almost need of such a rest.

### XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,  
I kept no count—I took no note,  
I had no hope my eyes to raise,  
And clear them of their dreary mote;  
At last men came to set me free,  
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,  
It was at length the same to me,  
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,  
I learn'd to love despair.  
And thus when they appear'd at last,  
And all my bonds aside were cast,  
These heavy walls to me had grown  
A hermitage—and all my own!  
And half I felt as they were come  
To tear me from a second home:

## THE PRISONER OF CHILAN

With spiders I had friendship made,  
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,  
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
And why should I feel less than they?  
We were all inmates of one place,  
And I, the monarch of each race,  
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!  
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;  
My very chains and I grew friends,  
So much a long communion tends  
To make us what we are:—even I  
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

# 'The Coliseum



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd ap-  
plause,  
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-  
men.  
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore,  
but because  
Such were the bloody Circus' genial  
laws,  
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore  
not?  
What matters where we fall to fill the  
maws  
Of worms — on' battle-plains or listed  
spot?  
Both are but theatres where the chief  
actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his droop'd head sinks quite un-  
low—

## THE COLISEUM

And through his side the last (ropes,  
ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by  
one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and  
now  
The arena swims around him—he is  
gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd  
the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his  
eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far  
away;  
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor  
prize,  
But where his rude hut by the Danube  
lay,  
There were his young barbarians all at  
play,  
There was their Dacian mother—he,  
their sire,  
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he  
expire  
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and  
glut your ire!

# The Dogs' Carnival



FROM "THE SIEGE  
OF CORINTH"

He wander'd on along the beach,  
Till within the range of a carbine's reach  
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him  
not,

Or how could he 'scape from the hostile  
shot?

Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?  
Were their hands grown stiff, or their  
hearts wax'd cold?

I know not, in sooth; but from yonder  
wall

There flash'd no fire, and there hiss'd no  
ball,

Though he stood beneath the bastion's  
frown,

That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the  
town;

Though he heard the sound, and could  
almost tell

The sullen words of the sentinel,



## THE DOGS' CARNIVAL

As his measured step on the Stone<sup>1</sup> below  
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;  
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall  
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,  
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and  
limb;

They were too busy to bark at him!  
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd  
the flesh,

As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;  
And their white tusks crunch'd over the  
whiter skull,

As it slipped through their jaws, when  
their edge grew dull,  
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the  
dead,

When they scarce could rise from the spot  
where they fed;

So well had they broken a lingering fast  
With those who had fallen for that night's  
repast.

And Alp knew, by the turbans' that roll'd  
on the sand,

The foremost of these were the best of  
his band:

Crimson and green were the shawls of  
their wear,

And each scalp had a single long tuft of  
hair,

All the rest was shaven and bare.

## THE DOGS' CARNIVAL

The scalp were in the wild dog's maw,  
The hair was tangled round his jaw:  
But close by the shore, on the edge of  
the gulf,  
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,  
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept  
away,  
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;  
But he seized on his share of a steed  
that lay,  
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the  
bay.

## Mazeppa's Ride

FROM "MAZEPPA"

"The wood was pass'd; 't was more than  
noon,  
But chill the air, although in June;  
Or it might be my veins ran cold—  
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;  
And I was then not what I seem,  
But headlong as a wintry stream,  
And wore my feelings out before  
I well could count their causes o'er:  
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,  
The tortures which beset my path,  
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,  
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;  
Sprung from a race whose rising blood  
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,  
And trodden hard upon, is like  
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,  
What marvel if this worn-out trunk  
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?

## MAZEPPA'S RIDE

The Earth gave way, the skies roll'd  
round,

Seem'd to sink upon the ground;

But err'd, for I was fastly bound.

My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew  
sore,

And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:

The skies spun like a mighty wheel;

I saw the trees like drunkards reel,

And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,

Which saw no farther: he who dies

Can die no more than then I died.

O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,

I felt the blackness come and go,

And strove to wake; but could not  
make

My senses climb up from below:

I felt as on a plank at sea,

When all the waves that dash o'er thee,

At the same time upheave and whelm,

And hurl thee towards a desert realm.

My undulating life was as

The fancied lights that flitting pass

Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when

Fever begins upon the brain.

“Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd

Back from the solitary world

Which lay around—behind—before.

What boot'd it to traverse o'er

## MAZEPPA'S RIDE

Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,  
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,  
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;  
No sign of travel—none of toil;  
The very air was mute;  
And not an insect's shrill small horn,  
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne  
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,  
Panting as if his heart would burst,  
The weary brute still stagger'd on;  
And still we were—or seem'd—alone.  
At length, while reeling on our way,  
Methought I heard a courser neigh,  
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.  
Is it the wind whose branches stirs?  
No, no! from out the forest prance

A trampling troop; I see them come!  
In one vast squadron they advance!

I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.  
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;  
But where are they the reins to guide?  
A thousand horse—and none to ride!  
With flowing tail, and flying mane,  
Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain,  
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,  
And feet that iron never shod,  
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,  
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,  
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,  
Came quickly thundering on,

## MAZEPPA'S RIDE

As if but faint approach to meet;  
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,  
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,  
A moment, with a faint low neigh,  
He answer'd, and then fell;  
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,  
And reeking limbs immoveable,  
His first and last career is done!  
On come the troop—they saw him stoop,  
They saw me strangely bound along  
His back 'with many a bloody thong:  
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,  
Gallop a moment here and there,  
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,  
Then plunging back with sudden bound,  
Headed by one black mighty steed,  
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,  
Without a single speck or hair  
Of white upon his shaggy hide;  
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve  
aside,  
And backward to the forest fly,  
By instinct, from a human eye.

. . . . .

“The sun was sinking—still I lay  
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;  
I thought to mingle there our clay,  
And my dim eyes of death had need,  
No hope arose of being freed:

## MAZEPPA'S RIDE

I cast my last looks up the sky,  
And there between me and the sun  
I saw the expecting raven fly,  
Who scarce would wait till both should die,  
Ere his repast begun;  
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,  
And each time nearer than before;  
I saw his wing through twilight flit,  
And once so near me he alit  
I could have smote, but lack'd the  
strength;  
But the slight motion of my hand,  
And feeble scratching of the sand,  
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,  
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,  
Together scared him off at length.  
I know no more—my latest dream  
Is something of a lovely star  
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,  
And went and came with wandering beam,  
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense  
Sensation of recurring sense,  
And then subsiding back to death,  
And then again a little breath,  
A little thrill, a short suspense,  
An icy sickness curdling o'er  
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my  
brain—  
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,  
A sigh, and nothing more.

# The Falls of Terni



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

The roar of waters!—from the headlong  
height.

Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;  
The fall of waters! rapid as the light  
The flashing mass foams shaking the  
abyss;

The hell of waters! where they howl  
and hiss,

And boil in endless torture; while the  
sweat

Of their great agony, wrung out from  
this

Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks  
of jet

That gird the gulf around, in pitiless  
horror set,

And mounts in spray the skies, and  
thence again

Returns in an unceasing shower, which  
round,



## THE FALLS OF TERNA

With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,  
Is an eternal April to the ground,  
Making it all one emerald:—how profound  
The gulf! and how the giant element  
From rock to rock leaps with delirious  
bound,  
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward  
worn and rent  
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms  
a fearful vent

To the broad column which rolls on,  
and shows  
More like the fountain of an infant sea  
Torn from the womb of mountains by  
the throes  
Of a new world, than only thus to be  
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,  
With many windings, through the vale:  
—Look back!  
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,  
As if to sweep down all things in its  
track,  
Charming the eye with dread,—a match-  
less cataract,  
Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,  
From side to side, beneath the glittering  
morn,

## THE FALLS OF TERNI

An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,  
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, un-  
worn

Its steady dyes, while all around is torn  
By the distracted waters, bears serene  
Its brilliant hues with all their beams  
unshorn:

Resembling, 'mid the torture of the  
scene,  
Love watching Madness with unalterable  
mien.



## AN AUGUST EVENING

Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and  
remains

Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian  
hill,

As Day and Night contending were,  
Until

Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently  
flows

The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues  
instil

The odorous purple of a new-born rose,  
Which streams upon her stream, and  
glass'd within it glows,

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which,  
from afar,

Comes down upon its waters; all its  
hues,

From the rich sunset to the rising star,  
Their magical variety diffuse:

And now they change; a paler shadow  
stretches

Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting  
day

Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang  
imbues

With a new colour as it gasps away,  
The last still loveliest, till—'t is gone—and  
all is gray.

# Venice

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of  
Sighs;  
A palace and a prison on each hand:  
I saw from out the waves her structures  
rise  
As from the stroke of the enchanter's  
wand:  
A thousand years their cloudy wings  
expand  
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
O'er the far times, when many a subject  
land  
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble  
piles,  
Where Venice sate in state, throned on  
her hundred isles!  
She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from  
ocean,  
Rising with her tiara of proud towers  
At airy distance, with majestic motion,  
A ruler of the waters and their powers:

## VENICE

And such she was;—her daughters had  
their dowers

From spoils of nations, and the exhaust-  
less East.

Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling  
showers.

In purple was she robed, and of her  
feast

Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dig-  
nity increased.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,  
And silent rows the songless gondolier;  
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,  
And music meets not always now the ear:  
Those days are gone—but Beauty still  
is here.

States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth  
not die,

Nor yet forget how Venice once was  
dear,

The pleasant place of all festivity,  
The revel of the earth, the masque of  
Italy!

. . . . .  
The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;  
And, annual marriage now no more  
renew'd,

The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,  
Neglected garment of her widowhood!

## VENICE

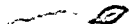

St. Mark yet sees his lion where he  
stood  
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd  
power,  
Over the proud Place where an Emperor  
sued,  
And monarchs gazed and envied in the  
hour  
When Venice was a queen with an un-  
equall'd dower.

. . . . .  
Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long  
file  
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;  
But where they dwelt, the vast and  
sumptuous pile  
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid  
trust;  
Their sceptre broken, and their sword  
in rust,  
Have yielded to the stranger: empty  
halls,  
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such  
as must  
Too oft remind her who and what  
enthral,  
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice'  
lovely walls.

## VENICE

I loved her from my boyhood; she to  
me  
Was as a fairy city of the heart,  
Rising like water-columns from the sea,  
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the  
mart;  
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shak-  
speare's art,  
Had stamp'd her image in me, and  
even so,  
Although I found her thus, we did not  
part,  
Perchance even dearer in her day of  
woe,  
Than when she was a boast, a marvel  
and a show.\*



Rome.  

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!  
The orphans of the heart must turn to  
    thee,  
Lone mother of dead empires! and con-  
    trol  
In their shut breasts their petty misery.  
What are our woes and sufferance?  
    Come and see  
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod  
    your way  
O'er steps of broken thrones and  
    temples, Ye!  
Whose agonies are evils of a day—  
A world is at our feet as fragile as our  
    clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,  
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless  
    woe;

An empty urn within her wither'd hands,  
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long  
     ago;  
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes  
     now;  
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless  
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou  
     flow,  
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilder-  
     ness?  
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle  
     her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War,  
     Flood, and Fire,  
 Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's  
     pride;  
 She saw her glories star by star expire,  
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs  
     ride,  
 Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far  
     and wide  
 Temple and tower went down, nor left  
     a site:  
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the  
     void,  
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar  
     light,  
 And say, "Here was, or is", where all is  
     doubly night?

## ROME

This mountain, whose obliterated plan  
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,  
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van  
Till the sun's rays with added flame  
were fill'd!  
Where are its golden roofs? where those  
who dared to build?

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,  
Thou nameless column with the buried  
base!  
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's  
brow?  
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-  
place.  
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the  
face,  
Titus' or Trajan's? No—'tis that of  
Time:  
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth dis-  
place  
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb  
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes  
slept sublime.

# Nature and Solitude

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and  
fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's  
dominion dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely  
been;  
To climb the trackless mountain all  
unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a  
fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to  
lean;  
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view  
her stores unroll'd.  
But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the  
shock of men,  
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,



## NATURE AND SOLITUDE

As on a place of agony and strife,  
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,  
To act and suffer, but remount at last  
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to  
    spring,  
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as  
    the blast  
Which it would cope with, on delighted  
    wing,  
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round  
    our being cling.

And when, at length, the mind shall  
    be all free  
From what it hates in this degraded form,  
Rest of its carnal life, save what shall be  
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—  
When elements to elements conform,  
And dust is as it should be, shall I not  
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more  
    warm?  
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each  
    spot?  
Of which, even now, I share at times the  
    immortal lot?

    . . . . .  
Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake,  
    lightnings! ye!  
With night, and clouds, and thunder,  
    and a soul

## NATURE AND SOLITUDE

To make these felt and feeling, well  
may be  
Things that have made me watchful;  
the far roll  
Of your departing voices, is the knoll  
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.  
But where of ye, O tempests! is the  
goal?  
Are ye like those within the human  
breast?  
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some  
high nest?

Could I embody and unbosom now  
That which is most within me,—could  
I wreak  
My thoughts upon expression, and thus  
throw  
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings,  
strong or weak,  
All that I would have sought, and all  
I seek,  
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into  
*one* word,  
And that one word were Lightning, I  
would speak;  
But as it is, I live and die unheard,  
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing  
it as a sword.

## Lines



ON HEARING THAT  
LADY BYRON  
WAS ILL

And thou wert sad—yet I was not with thee;  
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not  
near;

Methought that joy and health alone  
could be

Where I was *not*—and pain and sorrow  
here!

And is it thus?—it is as I foretold,  
And shall be more so; for the mind re-  
coils

Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies  
cold,

While heaviness collects the shatter'd  
spoils.

It is not in the storm nor in the strife  
We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no  
more,

But in the after-silence on the shore,  
When all is lost, except a little life.





And spared, for thy sake, some I should  
 not spare;  
 And thus upon the world—trust in thy  
 truth,  
 And the wild fame of my ungovern'd  
 youth—  
 On things that were not, and on things  
 that are—  
 Even upon such a basis hast thou built  
 A monument, whose cement hath been  
 guilt!  
 The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,  
 And flew'd down, with an unsuspected  
 sword,  
 Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better  
 life  
 Which, but for this cold treason of thy  
 heart,  
 Might still have risen from out the grave  
 of strife,  
 And found a nobler duty than to part.  
 But of thy virtues didst thou make a  
 vice,  
 Trafficking with them in a purpose  
 cold,  
 For present anger, and for future gold—  
 And buying other's grief at any price.  
 And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,  
 The early truth, which was thy proper  
 praise,

## LINES

Did not still walk beside thee—but at  
times,  
And with a breast unknowing its own  
crimes,  
Deceit, averments incompatible,  
Equivocations, and the thoughts which  
dwell  
In Janus-spirits—the significant eye  
Which learns to lie with silence—the pre-  
text  
Of prudence, with advantages annex'd—  
The acquiescence in all things which tend,  
No matter how, to the desired end—  
All found a place in thy philosophy.  
The means were worthy, and the end is  
won—  
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

## Stanzas

Could Love for ever  
Run like a river,  
And Time's endeavour  
Be tried in vain—  
No other pleasure  
With this could measure;  
And like a treasure  
We'd hug the chain.  
But since our sighing  
Ends not in dying,  
And, form'd for flying,  
Love plumes his wing;  
Then for this reason  
Let's love a season;  
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted  
Feel broken-hearted,  
And, all hopes thwarted,  
Expect to die;  
A few years older,  
Ah! how much colder  
They might behold her  
For whom they sigh!

## STANZAS

When link'd together,  
In every weather,  
They pluck Love's feather  
From out his wing—  
He'll stay for ever,  
But sadly shiver  
Without his plumage, when past the  
Spring.

## Stanzas for Music



Bright be the place of thy soul!  
No lovelier spirit than thine  
E'er burst from its mortal control,  
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.  
On earth thou wert all but divine,  
As thy soul shall immortally be;  
And our sorrow may cease to repine  
When we know that thy God is with  
thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!  
May its verdure like emeralds be!  
There should not be the shadow of gloom  
In aught that reminds us of thee.  
Young flowers and an evergreen tree  
May spring from the spot of thy rest:  
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;  
For why should we mourn for the  
blest?

## She Walks In Beauty



She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impair'd the nameless grace,  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-  
place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

## When we Two Parted

When we two parted  
In silence and tears,  
Half broken-hearted  
• To sever for years,  
Pale grew thy cheek and cold  
Colder thy kiss;  
Truly that hour foretold  
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning  
Sank chill on my brow—  
It felt like the warning  
Of what I feel now.  
• Thy vows are all broken,  
And light is thy fame;  
I hear thy name spoken,  
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,  
A knell to mine ear;  
A shudder comes o'er me—  
Why wert thou so dear?



*WHEN WE TWO PARTED*

They know not I knew thee,  
Who knew thee too well:--  
Long, long shall I rue thee,  
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—  
In silence I grieve,  
That thy heart could forget,  
Thy spirit deceive.  
If I should meet thee  
After long years,  
How should I greet thee?—  
With silence and tears.

Oh, Snatch'd Away  
In Beauty's Bloom

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,  
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;  
But on thy turf shall roses rear  
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;  
And the wild cypress wave in tender  
gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream  
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,  
And feed deep thought with many a  
dream,  
And lingering pause and lightly tread;  
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd  
the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,  
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:  
Will this unteach us to complain?  
Or make one mourner weep the less?  
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,  
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

## Euthanasia

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring  
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,  
Oblivion! may thy languid wing  
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,  
To weep, or wish, the coming blow:  
No maiden, with dishevell'd hair,  
To feel, or feign, decorous woe,

But silent let me sink to earth,  
With no officious mourners near:  
I would not mar one hour of mirth,  
Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour  
Could nobly check its useless sighs,  
Might then exert its latest power  
In her who lives and him who dies.

'T were sweet, my Psyche, to the last  
Thy features still serene to see:  
Forgetful of its struggles past,  
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

## EUTHANASIA

But vain the wish—for Beauty still  
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;  
And women's tears, produced at will,  
Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,  
Without regret, without a groan;  
For thousands Death hath ceased to  
lower,  
And pain been transient or unknown.

“Ay, but to die, and go”, alas!  
Where all have gone, and all must go!  
To be the nothing that I was  
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,  
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,  
And know, whatever thou hast been,  
'Tis something better not to be.

And Thou  
art Dead,  
as Young  
and Fair



And thou art dead, as young and fair  
As aught of mortal birth;  
And form so soft, and charms so rare,  
Too soon return'd to Earth!  
Though Earth received them in her bed,  
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread  
In carelessness or mirth,  
There is an eye which could not brook  
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,  
Nor gaze upon the spot;  
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,  
So I behold them not:  
It is enough for me to prove  
That what I loved, and long must love,  
Like common earth can rot;  
To me there needs no stone to tell,  
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

# AND THOU ART DEAD

Yet did I love thee to the last  
As fervently as thou,  
Who didst not change through all the past,  
• And canst not alter now.  
The love where Death has set his seal,  
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,  
Nor falsehood disavow:  
And, what were worse, thou canst not see  
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;  
The worst can be but mine:  
The sun that cheers, the storm that  
lowers,

Shall never more be thine.  
The silence of that dreamless sleep  
I envy now too much to weep;  
Nor need I to repine  
That all those charms have pass'd away;  
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd  
Must fall the earliest prey;  
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,  
The leaves must drop away:  
And yet it were a greater grief  
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,  
Than see it pluck'd to-day;  
Since earthly eye but ill can bear  
To trace the change to foul from fair.

AND THOU ART DEAD.

I know not if I could have borne  
To see thy beauties fade;  
The night that follow'd such a morn  
Had worn a deeper shade:  
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,  
And thou wert lovely to the last;  
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;  
As stars that shoot along the sky  
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

At once I wept, if I could weep,  
My tears might well be shed,  
To think I was not near to keep  
One vigil o'er thy bed;  
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,  
To fold thee in a faint embrace,  
Uphold thy drooping head;  
And show that love, however vain,  
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,  
Though thou hast left me free,  
The loveliest things that still remain,  
Than thus remember thee!  
The all of thine that cannot die  
Through dark and dread Eternity  
Returns again to me.  
And more thy buried love endears  
Than aught, except its living years.

• Stanzas Written  
on the Road  
between Florence  
and Pisa



Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;  
The days of our youth are the days of  
our glory;  
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-  
twenty  
Are worth all your laurels, though ever  
so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the  
brow that is wrinkled?  
'Tis but as a dead-flower with May-dew  
besprinkled.  
Then away with all such from the head  
that is hoary!  
What care I for the wreaths that can  
*only* give glory?

Oh Fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy  
praises,  
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-  
sounding phrases,



## STANZAS

Than to see the bright eyes of the dear  
one discover  
She thought that I was not unworthy to  
love her.

*There* chiefly I sought thee, *there* only  
I found thee;  
Her glance was the best of the rays that  
surround thee;  
When it sparkled o'er aught that was  
bright in my story,  
I knew it was love, and I felt it was  
glory.

## To Thomas Moore

My boat is on the shore,  
And my bark is on the sea,  
But, before I go, Tom Moore,  
Here's a double health to thee

Here's a sigh to those who love me,  
And a smile to those who hate;  
And, whatever sky's above me,  
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,  
Yet it still shall bear me on;  
Though a desert should surround me,  
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,  
As I gasp'd upon the brink,  
Ere my fainting spirit fell,  
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,  
The libation I would pour  
Should be—peace with thine and mine,  
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

So, We'll go  
No More  
A Roving

So, we'll go no more a roving  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving,  
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,  
And the soul wears out the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,  
And the day returns too soon,  
Yet we'll go no more a roving  
By the light of the moon.

# Italy and England

FROM "DEFFO"

With all its sinful doings, I must say,  
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,  
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,  
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from  
tree to tree  
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a  
play,  
Or melodrame, which people flock to  
see,  
When the first act is ended by a dance  
In vineyards copied from the south of  
France.

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,  
Without being forced to bid my groom  
be sure  
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd  
about,  
Because the skies are not the most  
secure;



## ITALY AND ENGLAND

And sounds as if it should be writ on  
satin,  
With syllables which breathe of the  
sweet South,

And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,  
That not a single accent seems uncouth,  
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting  
guttural,  
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit,  
and sputter all.

I like the women too (forgive my folly),  
From the rich peasant-cheek of ruddy  
bronze,  
And large black eyes that flash on you a  
volley  
Of rays that say a thousand things at  
once,  
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,  
But clear, and with a wild and liquid  
glance,  
Heart on her lips, and soul within her  
eyes,  
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her  
skies.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!  
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire

## ITALY AND ENGLAND

Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and  
vies  
With all we know of Heaven, or can  
desire,  
In what he hath bequeath'd us?—in what  
guise,  
Though flashing from the fervour of  
the lyre,  
Would *words* describe thy past and present  
glow,  
While yet Canova can create below?

"England! with all thy faults" I love  
thee still,"

I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;  
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;  
I like the government (but that is not  
it);

I like the freedom of the press and quill;  
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've  
got it);

I like a parliamentary debate, o  
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

I like the taxes, when they're not too  
many;

I like a seacoal fire, when not too  
dear;

I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;  
Have no objection to a pot of beer;

## ITALY AND ENGLAND

I like the weather, when it is not rainy,  
That is, I like two months of every  
year.

And so God save the Regent, Church,  
and King!

Which means that I like all and every-  
thing.

Our standing army, and disbanded sea-  
men,

Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the  
nation's debt,

Our little riots just to show we are free  
men,

Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,  
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,  
All these I can forgive, and those forget,  
And greatly venerate our recent glories,  
And wish they were not owing to the  
Tories.

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find

Digression is a sin, that by degrees  
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,  
And, therefore, may the reader too dis-  
please—

The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,

And caring little for the author's ease,  
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard  
And hapless situation for a bard.





Epistle from  
Mr. Murray to  
Dr. Polidori



Dear Doctor, I have read your play  
Which is a good one in its way,—  
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,  
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels  
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,  
Afford hysterical relief  
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,  
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;  
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery;  
Your dialogue is apt and smart;  
The play's concoction full of art;  
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,  
All stab, and every body dies.  
In short, your tragedy would be  
The very thing to hear and see:  
And for a piece of publication,  
If I decline on this occasion,  
It is not that I am not sensible  
To merits in themselves ostensible,



## TO DR. POLIDORI

A smart critique upon St. Helena,  
Or if you only would but tell in a  
Short compass what—but, to resume:  
As I was saying, sir, the room—  
The room's so full of wits and bards,  
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and  
Wards,

And others, neither bards nor wits:—  
My humble tenement admits  
All persons in the dress of gent,  
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,  
All clever men, who make their way:  
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chan-  
trey,

Are all partakers of my pantry.  
They're at this moment in discussion  
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.  
Her book, they say, was in advance—  
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!  
Thus run our time and tongues away;—  
But, to return, sir, to your play:  
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,  
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill.

My hands so full, my head so busy,  
I'm almost dead, and always dizzy;  
And so, with endless truth and hurry,  
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY.

# The Coteries



FROM "BEFFO"

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in  
criticism;

Nor write, and so they don't affect the  
muse:

Were never caught in epigram or witti-  
cism,

Have no romances, sermons, plays, re-  
views,—

In harams learning soon would make a  
pretty schism!

But luckily these beauties are no  
"Blues",

No bustling Botherbys have they to show  
'em

"That charming passage in the last new  
poem":

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,  
Who having angled all his life for  
fame,

And getting but a nibble at a time,  
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same

## THE COTERIES

Small "Triton of the minnows", the sublime

Of mediocrity, the furious tame,  
The echo's echo, usher of the school  
Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a  
fool!

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,  
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means  
good in law),

Humming like flies around the newest  
blaze,

The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,  
Teasing with blame, excruciating with  
praise,

Gorging the little fame he gets all  
raw,

Translating tongues he knows not even  
by letter,

And sweating plays so middling, bad  
were better.

One hates an author that's *all author*,  
fellows

In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with  
ink,

So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,  
One don't know what to say to them,  
or think,

## THE COTERIES

Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;  
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'er

the pink  
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,  
These unquench'd snuffings of the mid-  
night taper.

Of these same we see several, and of  
others,

Men of the world, who know the world  
like men,

Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better  
brothers,

Who think of something else besides  
the pen;

But for the children of the "mighty  
mother's",

The would-be wits and can't-be gentle-  
men,

I leave them to their daily "tea is ready",  
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

## Dedication



TO "BOB JEAN"

### I

Bob Southey! You're a poet—Poet-  
laureate,

And representative of all the race;  
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a  
Tory at

Last,—yours has lately been a common  
case;

And now, my Epic Renegade! what are  
ye at?

With all the Lakers, in and out of  
place?

A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye  
Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a  
pye;

### II

"Which pye being open'd they began to  
sing"

(This old song and new simile holds  
good),

(B 213)



## DEDICATION

“A dainty dish to set before the King”,  
Or Regent, who admires such kind of  
food;—  
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,  
But like a hawk encumber'd with his  
hood,—  
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—  
I wish he would explain his Explan-  
ation.

### III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,  
At being disappointed in your wish  
To supersede all warblers here below,  
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;  
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,  
And tumble downward like the flying  
fish  
Gasping on deck, because you soar too  
high, Bob,  
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry,  
Bob!

### IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long “Ex-  
cursion”  
(I think the quarto holds five hundred  
pages),  
Has given a sample from the vasty ver-  
sion  
Of his new system to perplex the sages;

## TO "DON JUAN"

'Tis poetry—at least by his assertion,  
And may appear so when the dog-star  
rages—  
And he who understands it would be  
able  
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

### v

You—Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion  
From better company, have kept your  
own  
At Keswick, and, through still continued  
fusion  
Of one another's minds, at last have  
grown  
To deem as a most logical conclusion,  
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:  
There is a narrowness in such a notion,  
Which makes me wish you'd change your  
lakes for ocean.

### vi

I would not imitate the petty thought,  
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,  
For all the glory your conversion brought,  
Since gold alone should not have been  
its price.

## DEDICATION

You have your salary; was't for that  
you wrought?

And Wordsworth has his place in the  
Excise.

You're shabby fellows—true—but poets  
still,

And duly seated on the immortal hill.

### VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your  
brows—

Perhaps some virtuous blushes;—let  
them go—

To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs—

And for the fame you would engross  
below,

The field is universal, and allows

Scope to all such as feel the inherent  
glow:

Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and  
Crabbe, will try

'Gainst you the question with posterity.

### VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian  
Muses,

Contend not with you on the winged  
steed,

TO "DON JUAN"

I wish your fate may yield ye, when she  
chooses,  
The fame you envy, and the skill you  
need;  
And recollect a poet nothing loses  
In giving to his brethren their full  
meed  
Of merit, and complaint of present days  
Is not the certain path to future praise.

IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity  
(Who does not often claim the bright  
reversion)  
Has generally no great crop to spare it,  
he  
Being only injured by his own asser-  
tion;  
And although here and there some glorious  
rarity  
Arise like Titan from the sea's immer-  
sion,  
The major part of such appellants go  
To—God knows where—for no one else  
can know.

X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,  
Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,

## DEDICATION

If Time, the Avenger, execrates his  
    wrongs,  
And makes the word "Miltonic" mean  
    "*sublime*",  
*He* deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,  
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;  
*He* did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,  
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

### XI

Think'st thou, could he—the blind Old  
    Man—arise  
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze  
    once more  
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,  
Or be alive again—again all hoar  
With time and trials, and those helpless  
    eyes,  
And heartless daughters—worn—and  
    pale—and poor;  
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey  
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

### XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-fac'd, placid mis-  
    creant!  
Dabbling its sleek young hands in  
    Erin's gore,

## TO "DON JUAN"

And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,  
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister  
shore,  
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could  
want,  
With just enough of talent, and no  
more,  
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,  
And offer poison long already mix'd.

### XIII

An orator of such set trash of phrase  
Ineffably—legitimately vile,  
That even its grossest flatterers dare not  
praise,  
Nor foes—all nations—condescend to  
smile,—  
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can  
blaze  
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless  
toil,  
That turns and turns to give the world a  
notion  
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

### XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,  
And botching, patching, leaving still  
behind

## DEDICATION

Something of which its masters are afraid,  
States to be curbed, and thoughts to be  
confined.

Conspiracy or Congress to be made—  
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind—  
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old  
chains,  
With God and man's abhorrence for its  
gains.

## XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,  
Emasculated to the marrow *It* !  
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and  
bind,  
Deeming the chain it wears even men  
may fit,  
Eutropius of its many masters,—blind  
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,  
Fearless—because *no* feeling dwells in ice,  
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

## XVI

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its  
bonds,  
For I will never *feel* them;—Italy!  
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds  
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed  
o'er thee—

TO "DON JUAN"

Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green  
wounds,  
Have voices—tongues to cry aloud for  
me.  
Europe has slaves—allies—kings—armies  
still,  
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVII

Meantime—Sir Laureate—I proceed to  
dedicate,  
In honest simple verse, this song to  
you.  
And, if in flattering strains I do not pre-  
dicate,  
'Tis that I still retain my "buff and  
blue";  
My politics as yet are all to educate:  
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,  
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite  
Herculean;  
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?



## Character of a Learned Lady



FROM "DON JUAN"

His mother was a learned lady, famed  
For every branch of every science  
known—

In every Christian language ever named,  
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone:  
She made the cleverest people quite  
ashamed,

And even the good with inward envy  
groan,  
Finding themselves so very much exceeded  
In their own way by all the things that  
she did.

Her memory was a mine: she knew by  
heart

All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,  
So that if any actor miss'd his part  
She could have served him for the  
prompter's copy;

## A LEARNED LADY

For her Feinagle's were an useless  
art, •  
And he himself obliged to shut up shop  
—he  
Could never make a memory so fine as  
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna  
Inez.

Her favourite science was the mathe-  
matical,  
Her noblest virtue was her magna-  
nimity,  
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was  
Attic all,  
Her serious sayings darken'd to sub-  
limity;  
In short, in all things she was fairly  
what I call  
A prodigy—her morning dress was  
dimity,  
Her evening silk, or, in the summer,  
muslin,  
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay  
puzzling.

She knew the Latin—that is, "the Lord's  
prayer",  
And Greek—the alphabet—I'm nearly  
sure;

## CHARACTER OF

She read some French romances here  
and there,  
Although her mode of speaking was  
not pure;  
For native Spanish she had no great care,  
At least her conversation was obscure;  
Her thoughts were theorems, her words  
a problem,  
As if she deem'd that mystery would  
ennoble 'em.

She liked the English and the Hebrew  
tongue,  
And said there was analogy between  
'em;  
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,  
But I must leave the proofs to those  
who've seen 'em,  
But this I heard her say, and can't be  
wrong,  
And all may think which way their  
judgments lean 'em,  
" 'Tis strange—the Hebrew noun which  
means 'I am',  
The English always use to govern d—n".

Some women use their tongues—she  
*look'd* a lecture,  
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a  
homily,

## A LEARNED LADY

An all-in-all sufficient self-director,  
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel  
Romilly,  
The Law's expounder, and the State's  
corrector,  
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly—  
One sad example more, that "All is  
vanity",—  
(The jury brought their verdict in "In-  
sanity".)

In short, she was a walking calculation,  
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from  
their covers,  
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,  
Or "Cœleb's Wife" set out in quest of  
lovers,  
Morality's prim personification,  
In which not Envy's self a flaw dis-  
covers;

To others' share let "female errors fall",  
For she had not even one—the worst of  
all.

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel—  
Of any modern female saint's com-  
parison;  
So far above the cunning powers of hell,  
Her guardian angel had given up his  
garrison;

## CHARACTER OF

Even her minutest motions went as  
well

As those of the best time-piece made  
by Harrison:

In virtues nothing earthly could surpass  
her,

Save thine "incomparable oil", Macassar!

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,  
A great opinion of her own good  
qualities;

Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear  
it,

And such, indeed, she was in her  
moralities;

But then she had a devil of a spirit,

And sometimes mix'd up fancies with  
realities,

And let few opportunities escape

Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

This was an easy matter with a man

Oft in the wrong, and never on his  
guard;

And even the wisest, do the best they  
can,

Have moments, hours, and days, so  
unprepared,

That you might "brain them with their  
lady's fan";

## *A LEARNED LADY*

And sometimes ladies hit exceeding  
hard,•  
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,  
And why and wherefore no one under-  
stands.

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed  
With persons of no sort of education,  
Or gentlemen, who, though well-born and  
bred,  
Grow tired of scientific conversation:  
I don't choose to say much upon this  
head,  
I'm a plain man, and in a single  
station,  
But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,  
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd  
you all?

## Juan and Julia



FROM "DON JUAN"

It was upon a day, a summer's day;—  
Summer's indeed a very dangerous  
season,  
And so is spring about the end of May;  
The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing  
reason';  
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may  
say,  
And stand convicted of more truth than  
treason,  
That there are months which nature grows  
more merry in,—  
March has its hares, and May must have  
its heroine.

'Twas on a summer's day—the sixth of  
June:  
I like to be particular in dates,  
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;  
They are a sort of post-house, where  
the Fates

## *JUAN AND JULIA*

Change horses, making history change  
its tune,

Then spur away o'er empires and o'er  
states,

Leaving at last not much besides chron-  
ology,

Excepting the post-obits of theology.

'Twas on the sixth of June, about the  
hour

Of half-past six—perhaps still nearer  
seven—

When Julia sate within as pretty a bower  
As e'er held houri in that heathenish  
heaven

Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon  
Moore,

To whom the lyre and laurels have  
been given,

With all the trophies of triumphant song—  
He won them well, and may he wear  
them long!

She sate, but not alone; I know not well  
How this same interview had taken  
place,

And even if I knew, I should not tell—

People should hold their tongues in any  
case;



## JUAN AND JULIA

No matter how or why the thing befell,  
But there were she and Juan, face to  
face—

When two such faces are so, 't would be  
wise,

But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

The sun set, and up rose the yellow  
moon:

The devil's in the moon for mischief;  
they

Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began  
too soon

Their nomenclature; there is not a day,  
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,

Sees half the business in a wicked way,  
On which three single hours of moon-  
shine smile—

And then she looks so modest all the  
while!

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,  
A stillness, which leaves room for the  
full soul

To open all itself, without the power  
Of calling wholly back its self-control;

The silver light which, hallowing tree  
and tower,

Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the  
whole,

## JUAN AND JULIA

Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it  
throws

A loving languor, which is not repose.

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,  
With your confounded fantasies, to  
more

Immoral conduct by the fancied sway  
Your system feigns o'er the controlless  
core

Of human hearts, than all the long  
array

Of poets and romancers:—You're a bore,  
A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,  
At best, no better than a go-between.

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,  
Until too late for useful conversation;  
The tears were gushing from her gentle  
eyes,

I wish, indeed, they had not had occa-  
sion,  
But who, alas! can love, and then be  
wise?

Not that remorse did not oppose temp-  
tation;

A little still she strove, and much re-  
pented,  
And whispering "I will ne'er consent"—  
consented.

## Julia's Letter



FROM "DON JUAN"

"They tell me 'tis decided you depart:  
'Tis wise—'tis well, but not the less a  
    pain;  
    have no further claim on your young  
    heart,  
    Mine is the victim, and would be again:  
To love too much has been the only art  
    I used;—I write in haste, and if a  
    stain  
Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it  
    appears;  
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no  
    tears.

"I loved, I love you, for this love have  
    lost  
    State, station, heaven, mankind's, my  
    own esteem,  
And yet can not regret what it hath cost,  
    So dear is still the memory of that  
    dream;

## JULIA'S LETTER

Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast,  
None can deem harshlier of me than I  
deem:

I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest—  
I've nothing to reproach, or to request.

“Man's love is of man's life a thing  
apart,

'Tis woman's whole existence; man  
may range  
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and  
the mart;

Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in ex-  
change  
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,  
And few there are whom these can not  
estrangle;

Men have all these resources, we but one,  
To love again, and be again undone.

“You will proceed in pleasure, and in  
pride,  
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er  
For me on earth, except some years to  
hide  
My shame and sorrow deep in my  
heart's core:

These I could bear, but cannot cast aside  
The passion which still rages as before,—

## *JULIA'S LETTER*

And so farewell—forgive me, love me—

No,  
That word is idle now—but let it go.

“My breast has been all weakness, is so  
yet;

But still I think I can collect my mind;  
My blood still rushes where my spirit's  
set,

As roll the waves before the settled  
wind;

My heart is feminine, nor can forget—

To all, except one image, madly blind;  
So shakes the needle, and so stands the  
pole,

As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd  
soul.

“I have no more to say, but linger still,

And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,  
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,

My misery can scarce be more com-  
plete;

I had not lived till now, could sorrow  
kill;

Death shuns the wretch who fain the  
blow would meet,

And I must even survive this last adieu,  
And bear with life, to love and pray for  
you!”

## JULIA'S LETTER

This note was written upon gilt-edged  
papers

With a neat little crow-quill, slight and  
new;

Her small white hand could hardly reach  
the taper,

It trembled as magnetic needles do,  
And yet she did not let one tear escape  
her;

The seal a sun-flower; "*Elle vous suit  
partout*",

The motto cut upon a white cornelian;

The wax was superfine, its hue ver-  
milion.

## Poetical Com- mandments

FROM "DON JUAN"

My poem's epic, and is meant to be  
Divided in twelve books; each book  
containing,  
With love, and war, a heavy gale at  
sea,  
A list of ships, and captains, and kings  
reigning,  
New characters; the episodes are three:  
A panoramic view of hell's in training,  
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,  
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

All these things will be specified in time,  
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,  
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,  
Which makes so many poets, and some  
fools:  
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of  
rhyme,

## POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

Good workmen never quarrel with their  
tools;  
I've got new mythological machinery,  
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

There's only one slight difference between  
Me and my epic brethren gone before,  
And here the advantage is my own, I  
ween  
(Not that I have not several merits  
more,  
But this will more peculiarly be seen);  
They so embellish, that 'tis quite a  
bore  
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,  
Whereas this story's actually true.

If any person doubt it, I appeal  
To history, tradition, and to facts,  
To newspapers, whose truth all know  
and feel,  
To plays in five, and operas in three  
acts;  
All these confirm my statement a good  
deal,  
But that which more completely faith  
exacts  
Is, that myself, and several now in  
Seville,  
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.



## POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

If ever I should condescend to prose,  
I'll write poetical commandments, which  
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those  
That went before; in these I shall  
enrich

My text with many things that no one  
knows,

And carry precept to the highest pitch:  
I'll call the work "Longinus o'er a  
Bottle,

Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle".

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden,  
Pope;

Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth,  
Coleridge, Southey;

Because the first is crazed beyond all  
hope,

The second drunk, the third so quaint  
and mouthy:

With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,  
And Campbell's Hippocrene is some-  
what drouthy:

Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers,  
nor

Commit—flirtation with the muse of  
Moore.

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,  
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;

## POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not bear false witness like  
"the Blues"—

(There's one, at least, is very fond of  
this);

Thou shalt not write, in short, but what  
I choose:

This is true criticism, and you may  
kiss—

Exactly as you please, or not—the rod;  
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G—d!

# Youth and Fame

FROM "DON JUAN"

"*Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventâ  
Consule Planco,*" Horace said, and so  
Say I; by which quotation there is meant a  
Hint that some six or seven good  
years ago

long ere I dreamt of dating from the  
Brenta)

I was most ready to return a blow,  
and would not brook at all this sort of  
thing  
in my hot youth—when George the  
Third was king.

But now at thirty years my hair is  
gray—

(I wonder what it will be like at forty?  
I thought of a peruke the other day)—  
My heart is not much greener; and, in  
short, I

Have squander'd my whole summer while  
't was May,  
And feel no more the spirit to retort; I

## YOUTH AND FAME

Have spent my life, both interest and  
principal,  
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul  
invincible.

No more—no more—Oh! never more on  
me  
The freshness of the heart can fall like  
dew,

Which out of all the lovely things we  
see  
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,  
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the  
bee.

Think'st thou the honey with those  
objects grew?  
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy  
power  
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

No more—no more—Oh! never more, my  
heart,  
Canst thou be my sole world, my  
universe!

Once all in all, but now a thing apart,  
Thou canst not be my blessing or my  
curse:

The illusion's gone for ever, and thou  
art  
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,

## YOUTH AND FAME

And in thy stead I've got a deal of  
judgment,  
Though heaven knows how it ever found  
a lodgment.

My days of love are over; me no more  
The charms of maid, wife, and still  
less of widow,  
Can make the fool of which they made  
before,—

In short, I must not lead the life I did  
do;  
The credulous hope of mutual minds is  
o'er,

The copious use of claret is forbid too,  
So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,  
I think I must take up with avarice.

Ambition was my idol, which was broken  
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of  
Pleasure;

And the two last have left me many a  
token

O'er which reflection may be made at  
leisure:

Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've  
spoken,

"Time is, Time was, Time's past":—  
a chymic treasure

## YOUTH AND FAME

Is glittering youth, which I have spent  
betimes—  
My heart in passion, and my head on  
rhymes.

What is the end of Fame? 'tis but to fill  
A certain portion of uncertain paper:  
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,  
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in  
vapour;  
For this men write, speak, preach, and  
heroes kill,  
And o'erbards burn what they call their  
"midnight taper".  
To have, when the original is dust,  
A name, a wretched picture, and worse  
bust.

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's  
King  
Cheops erected the first pyramid  
And largest, thinking it was just the  
thing  
To keep his memory whole, and mummy  
hid;  
But somebody or other rummaging  
Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:  
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,  
Since not a pinch of dust remains of  
Cheops.

## YOUTH AND FAME

But I, being fond of true philosophy,  
Say very often to myself, "Alas!  
All things that have been born were born  
to die,  
And flesh (which Death mows down to  
hay) is grass;  
You've pass'd your youth not so un-  
pleasantly,  
And if you had it o'er again—'t would  
pass—  
So thank your stars that matters are no  
worse,  
And read your Bible, sir, and mind your  
purse."

## Fame and Time



FROM "DON JUAN"

Well—well; the world must turn upon its  
axis,  
And all mankind turn with it, heads or  
tails,  
And live and die, make love and pay our  
taxes,  
And as the veering wind shifts, shift  
our sails;  
The king commands us, and the doctor  
quacks us,  
The priest instructs, and so our life  
exhales,  
A little• breath, love, wine, ambition,  
fame,  
Fighting, devotion, dust, — perhaps a  
name.

. . . . .  
But words are things, and a small drop  
of ink,  
Falling like dew, upon a thought, pro-  
duces



## FAME AND TIME

That which makes thousands, perhaps  
millions, think;  
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which  
man uses  
Instead of speech, may form a lasting  
link  
Of ages; to what straits old Time re-  
duces  
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like  
this,  
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's  
his.

And when his bones are dust, his grave  
a blank,

His station, generation, even his nation,  
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank  
In chronological commemoration,  
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,  
Or graven stone found in a barrack's  
station  
In digging the foundation of a closet,  
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

And glory long has made the sages  
smile;  
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,  
wind—  
Depending more upon the historian's style

## FAME AND TIME

Than on the name a person leaves  
behind:

Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to  
Hoyle:

The present century was growing blind  
To the great Marlborough's skill in  
giving knocks,  
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

Milton's the prince of poets—so we  
say;

A little heavy, but no less divine:  
An independent being in his day—  
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and  
wine;  
But his life falling into Johnson's way,  
We're told this great high priest of all  
the Nine  
Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd  
spouse,  
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,  
Like Shakspeare stealing deer, Lord  
Bacon's bribes;  
Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest  
acts;  
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well  
describes);

## FAME AND TIME

Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although  
truth exacts  
These amiable descriptions from the  
scribes,  
As most essential to their hero's story,  
They do not much contribute to his glory.  
All are not moralists, like Southey, when  
He prated to the world of "Panti-  
socracy";  
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who  
then  
Season'd his pedlar poems with democ-  
racy;  
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen  
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;  
When he and Southey, following the same  
path,  
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).  
Such names at present cut a convict figure,  
The very Botany Bay in moral geo-  
graphy;  
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,  
Are good manure for their more bare  
biography;  
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is  
bigger  
Than any since the birthday of typo-  
graphy;

## FAME AND TIME

A drowsy frowsy poem call'd the "Ex-  
cursion",  
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke  
Between his own and others' intellect;  
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers,  
like  
Johanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her  
sect,  
Are things which in this century don't  
strike  
The public mind,--so few are the elect;  
And the new births of both their stale  
virginities  
Have proved but dropsies, taken for  
divinities.

# The Shipwreck

FROM "DON JUAN"



At one o'clock the wind with sudden  
shift  
Threw the ship right into the trough  
of the sea,  
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,  
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the  
Whole of her stern frame, and, ere she  
could lift  
Herself from out her present jeopardy,  
The rudder tore away: 't was time to  
sound  
The pumps, and there were four feet  
water found.

One gang of people instantly was put  
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set  
To get up part of the cargo, and what  
not;  
But they could not come at the leak  
as yet;

## THE SHIPWRECK

At last they did get at it really, but

Still their salvation was an even bet:  
The water rush'd through in a way quite  
puzzling,  
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets,  
bales of muslin,

Into the opening; but all such ingredi-  
ents

Would have been vain, and they must  
have gone down.

Despite of all their efforts and expedients,  
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make  
them known

To all the brother tars who may have  
need hence,

For fifty tons of water were upthrown  
By them per hour, and they had all been  
undone,

But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

As day advanced the weather seem'd to  
abate,

And then the leak they reckon'd to  
reduce,

And keep the ship afloat, though three  
feet yet

Kept two hand and one chain-pump  
still in use.

## THE SHIPWRECK

The wind blew fresh again: as it grew  
late  
A squall came on, and while some guns  
broke loose,  
A gust—which all descriptive power tran-  
scends—  
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam  
ends

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd  
upset;  
The water left the hold, and wash'd the  
decks,  
And made a scene men do not soon forget;  
For they remember battles, fires, and  
wrecks,  
Or any other thing that brings regret,  
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or  
heads, or necks:  
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by  
the divers,  
And swimmers, who may chance to be  
survivors.

Immediately the masts were cut away,  
Both main and mizen; first the mizen  
went,  
The main-mast follow'd: but the ship still  
lay  
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.

## THE SHIPWRECK

Foremast and bowsprit were cut down,  
and they  
Eased her at last (although we never  
meant  
To part with all till every hope was  
blighted),  
And then with violence the old ship  
righted.

It may be easily supposed, while this  
Was going on, some people were un-  
quiet,  
That passengers would find it much amiss  
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their  
diet;  
That even the able seaman, deeming his  
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to  
riot,  
As upon such occasions tars will ask  
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from  
the cask.

There's nought, no doubt, so much the  
spirit calms  
As rum and true religion: thus it was,  
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some  
sung psalms,  
The high wind made the treble, and as  
bass



## THE SHIPWRECK

The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright-  
cured the qualms

Of all the luckless landmen's sea-sick  
maws:

Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, de-  
votion,

Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

Perhaps more mischief had been done,  
but for

Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his  
years,

Got to the spirit-room, and stood before

It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,  
As if Death were more dreadful by his  
door

Of fire than water, spite of oaths and  
tears,

Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they  
sunk,

Thought it would be becoming to die  
drunk.

"Give us more grog," they cried, "for it  
will be

All one an hour hence." Juan answer'd,  
"No!

'Tis true that death awaits both you and  
me,

But let us die like men, not sink below

## THE SHIPWRECK

Like brutes:"--and thus his dangerous  
post kept he,  
And none liked to anticipate the blow;  
• And even Pedrillo, his most reverend  
tutor,  
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,  
And made a loud and pious lamentation;  
Repented all his sins, and made a last  
Irrevocable vow of reformation;  
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril  
past)

To quit his academic occupation,  
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,  
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

But now there came a flash of hope once  
more;

Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the  
masts were gone,  
The leak increased; shoals round her, but  
no shore,

The vessel swam, yet still she held her  
own.  
They tried the pumps again, and though  
before  
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless  
grown,

## THE SHIPWRECK

A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to  
bale—

The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd  
a sail.

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd  
And for the moment it had some effect;  
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,  
Nor rag of canvas, what could they  
expect?

But still 'tis best to struggle to the last,  
'Tis never too late to be wholly wreck'd:  
And though 'tis true that man can only die  
once,

'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

There winds and waves had hurl'd them,  
and from thence,  
Without their will, they carried them  
away,

For they were forced with steering to  
dispense,

And never had as yet a quiet day  
On which they might repose, or even com-  
mence

A juremast or rudder, or could say  
The ship would swim an hour, which, by  
good luck,  
Still swam—though not exactly like a  
duck.

## THE SHIPWRECK

The wind, in fact, perhaps, was rather less,  
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce  
could hope  
To weather out much longer; the distress  
Was also great with which they had to  
cope  
For want of water, and their solid mess  
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope  
Was used—nor sail nor shore appear'd in  
sight,  
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming  
night.

•  
Again the weather threaten'd,—again blew  
A gale, and in the fore and after hold  
Water appear'd; yet, though the people  
knew  
All this, the most were patient, and  
Until the chains and leathers were worn  
through  
Of all our pumps:—a wreck complete she  
roll'd,  
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are  
Like human beings during civil war.  
Then came the carpenter, at last, with  
tears  
In his rough eyes, and told the captain,  
he

## THE SHIPWRECK

Could do no more: he was a man in years,  
And long had voyaged through many a  
stormy sea,  
And if he wept at length, they were not  
fears  
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,  
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and chil-  
dren,—  
Two things for dying people quite be-  
wildering.

The ship was evidently settling now  
Fast by the head; and, all distinction  
gone,  
Some went to prayers again, and made a  
vow  
Of candles to their saints—but there  
were none  
To pay them with; and some look'd o'er  
the bow;  
Some hoisted out the boats; and there  
was one  
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,  
Who told him to be damn'd—in his con-  
fusion.

Some lash'd them in their hammocks;  
some put on  
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;

## THE SHIPWRECK

Some cursed the day on which they saw  
the sun,

And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling,  
tore their hair;

And others went on as they had begun,  
Getting the boats out, being well aware  
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,  
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

The worst of all was, that in their con-  
dition,

Having been several days in great distress,  
Twas difficult to get out such provision  
As now might render their long suffer-  
ing less:

Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;  
Their stock was damaged by the weather's  
stress:

Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,  
Were all that could be thrown into the  
cutter.

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow  
Some pounds of bread, though injured  
by the wet;

Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;  
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived  
to get

A portion of their beef up from below,  
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,

## THE SHIPWRECK

But scarce enough to serve them for a  
luncheon—

Then there was rum, eight gallons in a  
puncheon.

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had  
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;  
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,  
As there were but two blankets for a sail,  
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad  
Threw in by good luck over the ship's  
rail;

And two boats could not hold, far less be  
stored,

To save one half the people then on board.

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went  
down

Over the waste of waters; like a veil,  
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose  
the frown

Of one whose hate is mask'd but to  
assail.

Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was  
shown,

And grimly darkled o'er their faces pale,  
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days  
had Fear

Been their familiar, and now Death was  
here.

## THE SHIPWRECK

Some trial had been making at a raft,  
With little hope in such a rolling sea,  
A sort of thing at which one would have  
laugh'd,  
If any laughter at such times could  
be,  
Unless with people who too much have  
quaff'd,  
And have a kind of wild and horrid  
glee,  
Half epileptical and half hysterical:—  
Their preservation would have been a  
miracle.

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hen-  
coops, spars,  
And all things, for a chance, had been  
cast loose,  
That still could keep afloat the struggling  
tars,  
For yet they strove, although of no great  
use:  
There was no light in heaven but a few  
stars,  
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their  
crews;  
She gave a hee!, and then a lurch to  
port,  
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in  
short.



## THE SHIPWRECK

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—

Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still  
the brave,—

Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful  
yell,

As eager to anticipate their grave;  
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,  
And down she suck'd with her the whirling  
wave,

Like one who grapples with his enemy,  
And strives to strangle him before he die.

e

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,  
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash  
Of echoing thunder; and then all was  
hush'd,

Save the wild wind and the remorseless  
dash

Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,  
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,  
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry  
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

## Juan and Haidee



FROM "DON JUAN"

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,  
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy  
shore,  
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an  
host,  
With here and there a creek, whose  
aspect wore  
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;  
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's  
roar,  
Save on the dead long summer days, which  
make  
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.  
And the small ripple spilt upon the beach  
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your  
champagne,  
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers  
reach,  
That spring-dew of the spirit! the  
heart's rain!

## *JUAN AND HAIDEE*

Few things surpass old wine; and th  
may preach

Who please,—the more because they  
preach in vain,—

Let us have wine and women, mirth and  
laughter,

Sermons and soda-water the day after.

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;  
The best of life is but intoxication:

Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are  
sunk

The hopes of all men, and of every  
nation;

Without their sap, how branchless were  
the trunk

Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on  
occasion!

But to return,—Get very drunk; and when  
You wake with headache, you shall see  
what then.

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring  
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll  
know

A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;  
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with  
snow,

Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,  
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,

## JUAN AND HAIDEE

After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,  
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-  
water.

The coast—I think it was the coast that I  
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the  
coast—

Lay at this period quiet as the sky,  
The sands untumbled, the blue waves  
untost,

And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,  
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost  
By some low rock or shelve, that made it  
fret

Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

And forth they wander'd, her sire being  
gone,

As I have said, upon an expedition;  
And mother, brother, guardian, she had  
none,

Save Zoe, who, although with due pre-  
cision

She waited on her lady with the sun,  
Thought daily service was her only  
mission,

Bringing warm water, wreathing her long  
tresses,

And asking now and then for cast-off  
dresses.

## *JUAN AND HAIDEE*

It was the cooling hour, just when the  
rounded

Red sun sinks down behind the azure  
hill,

Which then seems as if the whole earth it  
bounded,

Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and  
still,

With the far mountain-crescent half sur-  
rounded

On one side, and the deep sea calm and  
chill

Upon the other, and the rosy sky<sup>o</sup>

With one star sparkling through it like an  
eye.

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in  
hand,

Over the shining pebbles and the  
shells,

Glided along the smooth and harden'd  
sand,

And in the worn and wild receptacles  
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it  
were plann'd,

In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and  
cells,

They turn'd to rest; and, each clasped by  
an arm,

Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

## JUAN AND HAIDEE

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating  
glow  
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;

They gazed upon the glittering sea below,  
Whence the broad moon rose circling  
into sight;

They heard the waves' splash, and the  
wind so low,  
And saw each other's dark eyes darting  
light

Into each other—and, beholding this,  
Their lips drew near, and clung into a  
kiss;

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and  
love,

And beauty, all concentrating like rays  
Into one focus, kindled from above;

Such kisses as belong to early days,  
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in  
concert move,

And the blood's lava, and the pulse a  
blaze,

Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's  
strength,

I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.

By length I mean duration; theirs endured  
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they  
never reckon'd;

## *JUAN AND HAIDEE*

And if they had, they could not have  
secured

The sum of their sensations to a second:  
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,  
As if their souls and lips each other  
beckon'd,

Which, being join'd, like swarming bees  
they clung—

Their hearts the flowers from whence the  
honey sprung.

They were alone, but not alone as they  
• Who shut in chambers think it loneli-  
ness;

The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,  
The twilight glow, which momentarily  
grew less,

The voiceless sands, and dropping caves,  
that lay

Around them, made them to each other  
press,

As if there were no life beneath the sky  
Save theirs, and that their life could never  
die.

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone  
beach;

They felt no terrors from the night; they  
were

## JUAN AND HAIDEE

All in all to each other: though their speech  
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—  
And all the burning tongues the passions  
teach

Found in one sigh the best interpreter  
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all  
Which Eve has left her daughters since  
her fall.

Alas, the love of women! it is known  
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;  
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,  
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to  
bring

To them but mockeries of the past alone,  
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,  
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as  
real  
Torture is theirs—what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft  
unjust,  
Is always so to women; one sole bond  
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;  
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts  
despond  
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust  
Buys them in marriage—and what rests  
beyond?





## Marriage and the Muse

FROM "DON JUAN"

There's doubtless something in domestic  
doings  
Which forms, in fact, true love's anti-  
thesis;  
Romances paint at full length people's  
wooings,  
But only give a bust of marriages;  
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,  
There's nothing wrong in a connubial  
kiss:  
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's  
wife,  
He would have written sonnets all his  
life?

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,  
All comedies are ended by a marriage;  
The future states of both are left to faith,  
For authors fear description might dis-  
parage

## MARRIAGE AND HAIDEE

The world's husband, next a faithless  
neath,  
And then, nursing, praying, and all's  
their mind,  
So leaving a book ready,  
They say no more,  
Lady.

ehold, others dissi-

The only two that in my recollection their  
Have sung of heaven and hell, or  
marriage, are  
Dante and Milton, and of both the affec-  
tion  
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some  
bar  
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection  
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much  
to mar);  
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve  
Were not drawn from their spouses, you  
conceive.

Some persons say that Dante meant  
theology  
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,  
Although my opinion may require apo-  
logy,  
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,



Troy



FROM "DON JUAN"

There, on the green and village-cotted  
hill, is

(Flank'd by the Hellespont, and by the  
sea)

Entomb'd the bravest of the brave,  
Achilles;

They say so—(Bryant says the con-  
trary):

And farther downward, tall and towering  
still, is

The tumulus—of whom? Heaven knows;  
't may be

Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus;

All heroes, who if living still would slay  
us.

High barrows, without marble, or a name,  
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted  
plain,

And Ida in the distance, still the same,  
And old Scamander (if 'tis he), remain;

## TROY

The situation seems still form'd for fame—  
A hundred thousand men might fight  
again,

With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's  
walls,  
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise  
crawls;

Troops of untended horses; here and there  
Some little hamlets, with new names  
uncouth;

Some shepherds (unlike Paris), led to stare  
A moment at the European youth  
Whom to the spot their school-boy feel-  
ings bear;

A Turk, with beads in hand and pipe  
in mouth,  
Extremely taken with his own religion,  
Are what I found there—but the devil a  
Phrygian.

## Great Names



FROM "DON JUAN"

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a  
squabble;

But at this hour I wish to part in peace,  
Leaving such to the literary rabble;

Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to  
cease

While the right hand which wrote it still  
is able,

Or of some centuries to take a lease

The grass upon my grave will grow as  
long,

And sigh to midnight winds; but not to  
song.

Of poets who come down to us through  
distance

Of time and tongues, the foster-babes  
of Fame,

Life seems the smallest portion of exis-  
tence;

Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,

## GREAT NAMES

'Tis as a snowball which derives assistance  
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,  
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;  
But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow.

And so great names are nothing more  
than nominal,  
And love of glory's but an airy lust,  
Too often in its fury overcoming all  
Who would as 'twere identify their  
dust  
From out the wide destruction, which,  
entombing all,  
Leaves nothing till "the coming of the  
just"—  
Save change: I've stood upon Achilles'  
tomb,  
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt  
of Rome.

The very generations of the dead  
Are swept away, and tomb inherits  
tomb,  
Until the memory of an age is fled,  
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's  
doom:  
( B 213 )



## GREAT NAMES

Where are the epitaphs our fathers  
read?

Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral  
gloom

Which once-named myriads nameless lie  
beneath,

And lose their own in universal death.

I canter by the spot each afternoon

Where perish'd in his fame the hero-  
boy,

Who lived too long for men, but died too  
soon

For human vanity, the young De  
Foix!

A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,

But which neglect is hastening to de-  
stroy,

Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,

While weeds and ordure rankle round the  
base.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are  
laid:

A little cupola, more neat than solemn,  
Protects his dust, but reverence here is  
paid

To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's  
column:

## GREAT NAMES

The time must come, when both alike  
decaï'd,  
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's  
volume,  
Will sink where lie the songs and wars  
of earth,  
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

With human blood that column was  
cemented,  
With human filth that column is defiled,  
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were  
vented

To show his loathing of the spot he  
soil'd:  
Thus is the trophy used, and thus  
lamented

Should ever be those blood-hounds, from  
whose wild  
Instinct of gore and glory earth has  
known  
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

Yet there will still be bards: though fame  
is smoke,  
Its fumes are frankincense to human  
thought;  
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke  
Song in the world, will seek what then  
they sought;

## GREAT NAMES

As on the beach the waves at last are  
broke,

Thus to their extreme verge the pas-  
sions brought

Dash into poetry, which is but passion,  
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was

At once adventurous and contemplative,

Men who partake all 'passions as they  
pass,

Acquire the deep and bitter power to  
give

Their images again, as in a glass,

And in such colours that they seem to  
live;

You may do right forbidding them to  
show 'em,

But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

## Change of Illusions



FROM "DON JUAN"

"You take things coolly, sir," said Juan.

"Why,"

Replied the other, "what can a man  
do?

There still are many rainbows in your sky,  
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life  
is new,

Commence with feelings warm, and pros-  
pects high;

But time strips our illusions of their  
hue,

And one by one in turn, some grand mis-  
take

Casts off its bright skin yearly like the  
snake.

"'Tis true, it gets another bright and  
fresh,

Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone  
through,

## *CHANGE OF ILLUSIONS*

This skin must go the way, too, of all  
flesh,  
Or sometimes only wear a week or  
two;—  
Love's the first net which spreads its  
deadly mesh;  
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory,  
glue  
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter  
days,  
Where still we flutter on for pence or  
praise."

## Life



FROM "DON JUAN"

O Love! O Glory! what are you who fly  
Around us ever, rarely to alight?

There's not a meteor in the polar sky  
Of such transcendent and more fleeting  
flight.

Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift  
on high

Our eyes in search of either lovely  
light;

A thousand and a thousand colours they  
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

And such as they are, such my present  
tale is,

A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,  
A versified Aurora Borealis,

Which flashes o'er a waste and icy  
clime.

When we know what all are, we must  
bewail us,

But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime

## LIFE

To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know  
What, after *all*, are *all* things—but a  
show?

They accuse me—*Me*—the present write  
of  
The present poem—of—I know no.  
what—

A tendency to under-rate and scoff  
At human power and virtue, and all  
that;  
And this they say in language, rather  
rough.

Good God! I wonder what they would  
be at!

I say no more than hath been said in  
Danté's  
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,  
By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;  
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,  
Who knew this life was not worth a  
potato.

'Tis not their fault, nor mine, if this be  
so,—

For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,  
Nor even Diogenes.—We live and die,  
But which is best, you know no more  
than I.

## LIFE

Socrates said, our only knowledge was  
"To know that nothing could be  
known"; a pleasant  
Science enough, which levels to an ass  
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or  
present.  
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!  
Declared, with all his grand discoveries  
recent,  
That he himself felt only "like a youth  
Picking up shells by the great ocean—  
Truth".

Ecclesiastes said, "that all is vanity"—  
Most modern preachers say the same,  
or show it  
By their examples of true Christianity:  
In short, all know, or very soon may  
know it;  
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,  
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by  
poet,  
Must I restrain me, through the fear of  
strife,  
From holding up the nothingness of life?



## The Glory of War



FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now  
To paint a siege, wherein more men  
were slain,  
With deadlier engines and a speedier  
blow,  
Than in thy Greek gazette of that cam-  
paign;  
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,  
To vie with thee would be about as  
vain  
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;  
But still we moderns equal you in 'blood;  
If not in poetry, at least in fact;  
And fact is truth, the grand desidera-  
tum!  
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes  
each act,  
There should be ne'ertheless a slight  
substratum.

## THE GLORY OF WAR

But now the town is going to be attack'd;  
Great deeds are doing—how shall I  
relate 'em?

Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus  
watches  
To colour up his rays from your des-  
patches.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!  
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd  
and wounded!

Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,  
When my poor Greece was once, as  
now, surrounded!

Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart,  
ye

Shadows of glory! (lest I be con-  
founded),

A portion of your fading twilight hues,  
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

When I call "fading" martial im-  
mortality,

I mean, that every age and every year,  
And almost every day, in sad reality,

Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,  
Who, when we come to sum up the  
totality

Of deeds to human happiness most  
dear,

## THE GLORY OF WAR

Turns out to be a butcher in great business,  
Afflicting young folks with a sort of  
dizziness.

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery,  
scarlet,

Are things immortal to immortal man,  
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:

An uniform to boys is like a fan  
To women; there is scarce a crimson  
varlet

But deems himself the first in Glory's  
van.

But Glory's glory; and if you would find  
What that is—ask the pig who sees the  
wind!

## A Battle-field



FROM "THE JUVENILIA"

Oh, blood and thunder! and oh, blood  
and wounds!

These are but vulgar oaths, as you  
may deem,

Too gentle reader! and most shocking  
sounds;

And so they are; yet thus is Glory's  
dream

Unriddled, and as my true Muse ex-  
pounds

At present such things, since they are  
her theme,

So be they her inspirers! Call them  
Mars,

Bellona, what you will—they mean but  
wars.

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the  
men

To wield them in their terrible array.

## *A BATTLE-FIELD*

The army, like a lion from his den,  
March'd forth with nerves and sinews  
bent to slay,—

A human Hydra, issuing from its fen  
To breathe destruction on its winding  
way,

Whose heads were heroes, which cut off  
in vain,

Immediately in others grew again.

History can only take things in the gross;  
But could we know them in detail,  
perchance

In balancing the profit and the loss,  
War's merit it by no means might en-  
hance,

To waste so much gold for a little dross,  
As hath been done, mere conquest to  
advance.

The drying up a single tear has more  
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of  
gore.

And why?—because it brings self-approba-  
tion;

Whereas the other, after all its glare,  
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a  
nation,

Which (it may be) has not much left  
to spare,

## A BATTLE-FIELD

A higher title, or a loftier station,  
Though they may make Corruption gape  
or stare,  
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's  
battles,  
Are nothing but a child of Murder's  
rattles.

And such they are—and such they will be  
found:

Not so Leonidas and Washington,  
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,  
Which breathes of nations saved, not  
worlds undone.  
How sweetly on the ear such echoes  
sound!

While the mere victor's may appal or  
stun  
The servile and the vain, such names  
will be  
A watchword till the future shall be free.

The night was dark, and the thick mist  
allow'd  
Nought to be seen save the artillery's  
flame,  
Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery  
cloud,  
And in the Danube's waters shone the  
same—

## A BATTLE-FIELD

A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and  
loud  
Long booming of each peal on peal,  
o'ercame  
The ear far more than thunder; for  
Heaven's flashes  
Spare, or smite rarely — man's make  
millions ashes!

The column order'd on the assault scarce  
pass'd  
Beyond the Russian batteries a few  
toises,  
When up the bristling Moslem rose at  
last,  
Answering the Christian thunders with  
like voices:  
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream  
embraced,  
Which rock'd as 'twere beneath the  
mighty noises;  
While the whole rampart blaz'd like  
Etna, when  
The restless Titan hiccups in his den;  
And one enormous shout of "Aliah!"  
rose  
In the same moment, loud as even the  
roar

## A BATTLE-FIELD

Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes  
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and  
shore  
Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which  
close  
With thickening canopy the conflict o'er,  
Vibrate to the Eternal Name. Hark!  
through  
All sounds it pierceth, "Allah! Allah!  
Hu!"

The columns were in movement one and  
all,  
But of the portion which attack'd by  
water,  
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,  
Though led by Arseniew, that great  
son of slaughter,  
As brave as ever faced both bomb and  
ball.  
"Carnage" (so Wordsworth tells you)  
"is God's daughter":  
If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister,  
and  
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.  
The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the  
knee;  
Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball  
between  
(B 213)



## A BATTLE-FIELD

His cap and head, which proves the head  
to be  
Aristocratic as was ever seen,  
Because it then received no injury  
More than the cap; in fact, the ball  
could mean  
No harm unto a right legitimate head;  
"Ashes to ashes"—why not lead to lead?

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,  
Insisting on removal of *the prince*  
Amidst some groaning thousands dying  
near,—  
All common fellows, who might writhe  
and wince,  
And shriek for water into a deaf ear,—  
The General Markow, who could thus  
evince  
His sympathy for rank, by the same  
token,  
To teach him greater, had his own leg  
broken.

Three hundred cannon threw up their  
emetic,  
And thirty thousand muskets flung their  
pills,  
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.  
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills:

## A BATTLE-FIELD

Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians,  
yet tick,  
Like the death-watch, within our ears  
the ills

Past, present, and to come;—but all may  
yield  
To the true portrait of one battle-field;

There the still-varying pangs, which  
multiply  
Until their very number makes men  
hard

By the infinities of agony,  
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may  
regard—

The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white  
eye

Turn'd back within its socket,—these  
reward

Your rank and file by thousands, while  
the rest

May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

Yet I love glory;—glory's a great thing:—  
Think what it is to be in your old age

Maintain'd at the expense of your good  
king:

A moderate pension shakes full many  
a sage,

## A BATTLE-FIELD

And heroes are but made for bards to  
sing,  
Which is still better; thus in verse to  
wage  
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying  
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth  
destroying.

# Wellington

FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, Wellington! (or "Villainton"—for  
Fame  
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;  
France could not even conquer your great  
name,

But punn'd it down to this facetious  
phrase—  
Beating or beaten she will laugh the  
same)

You have obtain'd great pensions and  
much praise:  
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,  
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"

I don't think that you used Kinnaird  
quite well  
In Marinè's affair—in fact, 't was  
shabby,  
And like some other things won't do to tell  
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old  
abbey.



## WELLINGTON

If you have acted *once* a generous part,  
The world, not the world's masters,  
will decide,  
And I shall be delighted to learn who,  
Save you and yours, have gain'd by  
Waterloo?

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of  
battery:  
They say you like it too—'t is no great  
wonder.  
He whose whole life has been assault  
and battery,  
At last may get a little tired of thun-  
der;  
And swallowing eulogy much more than  
satire, he  
May like being praised for every lucky  
blunder,  
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations" not yet  
saved,  
And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.

I've done. Now go and dine from off  
the plate  
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,  
And send the sentinel before your gate  
A slice or two from your luxurious  
meals:



## WELLINGTON

Except the all-cloudless glory (which few  
men's is)

To free his country: Pitt too had his  
pride,

And as a high-soul'd minister of state is  
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,  
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:

You might have freed fallen Europe from  
the unity

Of tyrants, and been blest from shore  
to shore:

And *now*—what *is* your fame? Shall the  
Muse tune it ye?

*Now*—that the rabble's first vain shouts  
are o'er?

Go! hear it in your famish'd country's  
cries!

Behold the world! and curse your vic-  
tories!

As these new cantos touch on warlike  
feats,

To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to  
inscribe

Truths, that you will not read in the  
Gazettes,

But which 'tis time to teach the hire-  
ling tribe



## WELLINGTON

Who fatten on their country's gore, and  
debts,  
Must be recited—and without a bribe.

You *did great* things: but not being  
*great* in mind,

Have left *undone the greatest*—and man-  
kind.

# Don Juan at St. Petersburg

FROM "DON JUAN"

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:  
"The time is out of joint",—and so am  
I;•

I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,  
And deviate into matters rather dry.  
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this

I call  
Much too poetical: men should know  
why

They write, and for what end; but, note  
or text,

I never know the word which will come  
next.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,  
Now pondering:—it is time we should  
narrate.

I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—  
Now we'll get o'er the ground at a  
great rate.

## *DON JUAN AT*

I shall not be particular in stating  
His journey, we've so many tours of  
late:  
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose  
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;  
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long  
plume,  
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a  
storm,  
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,  
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn  
Gorme,  
Of yellow casimire we may presume,  
White stockings drawn uncurdled as new  
milk  
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the  
silk;

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in  
hand,  
Made up by youth, fame, and an army  
tailor—  
That great enchanter, at whose rod's  
command  
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self  
turns paler,

## ST. PETERSBURG

Seeing how Art can make her work more  
grand

(When she don't pin men's limbs in  
like a gaoler),—

Behold him placed as if upon a pillar!  
He

Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artill-  
lery!

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;  
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his  
quiver

Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at  
His side as a small sword, but sharp  
as ever;

His bow converted into a cock'd hat;  
But still so like, that Psyche were more  
clever

Than some wives (who make blunders no  
less stupid),

If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

## Newton and Poets



FROM "DON JUAN"

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found  
In that slight startle from his contem-  
plation—

'T is *said* (for I'll not answer above ground  
For any sage's creed or calculation)—  
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd  
round

In a most natural whirl, call'd "gravi-  
tation";  
And this is the sole mortal who could  
grapple,  
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

Man fell with apples, and with apples  
rose,

• If this be true; for we must deem the  
mode

In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose  
Through the then unpaved stars the  
turnpike road,

## NEWTON AND POETS

A thing to counterbalance human woes:  
For ever since immortal man hath  
glow'd  
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon  
Steam-engines will conduct him to themoon.

And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just  
now,

In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,  
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,  
And my internal spirit cut a caper:  
And though so much inferior, as I know,  
To those who, by the dint of glass and  
vapour,  
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,  
I wish to do as much by poesy.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail;  
but for

The stars, I own my telescope is dim;  
But at the least I have shunn'd the com-  
mon shore,  
And leaving land far out of sight,  
would skim

The ocean of eternity: the roar  
Of breakers has not daunted my slight,  
trim,

But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float  
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many  
a boat.

## London



FROM "DON JUAN"

The sun went down, the smoke rose up,  
as from

A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space  
Which well besem'd the "Devil's drawing-  
room",

As some have qualified that wondrous  
place:

But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,  
As one who, though he were not of  
the race,

Revered the soil, of those true sons the  
mother,

Who butcher'd half the earth, and, bullied  
t' other.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and  
shipping,

Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye  
Could reach, with here and there a sail  
just skipping

In sight, then lost amidst the forestry

## LONDON

Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peep-  
ing  
On tiptoe through their seal-coal canopy;  
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap  
crown  
On a fool's head—and there is London  
Town! .

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of  
smoke  
Appear'd to him as but the magic  
vapour  
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence  
broke  
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax  
and paper):  
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke  
Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a  
taper,  
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,  
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely  
clear.

He paused—and so will I; as doth a  
crew  
Before they give their broadside. By  
and by,  
My gentle countrymen, we will renew  
Our old acquaintance; and at least I'll  
try

(B 213)



## LONDON

To tell you truths *you* will not take as  
true,

Because they are so;—a male Mrs. Fry,  
With a soft besom will I sweep your  
halls,  
And brush a web or two from off the  
walls.

Oh, Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate?  
Why

Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore  
not begin  
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try  
Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.  
To mend the people's an absurdity,  
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,  
Unless you make their betters better:—  
Fy!  
I thought you had more religion, Mrs.  
Fry.

Teach them the decencies of good three-  
score,  
Cure them of tours, hussar and high-  
land dresses;  
Tell them that youth once gone returns  
no more,  
That hired huzzas redeem no land's  
distresses;

## LONDON

Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,  
Too •dull even for the dullest of ex-  
cesses,  
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,  
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at  
all.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too  
late  
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated,  
sated,  
To set up vain pretences of being great,  
'Tis •not so to be good; and be it  
stated,  
The worthiest kings have ever loved least  
state:  
And tell them—But you won't, and I  
have prated  
Just now enough; but by and by I'll  
prattle  
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.  
•

## Poets of the Age

FROM "DON JUAN"

In twice five years the "greatest living  
poet",

Like to the champion in the fisty ring,  
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,  
Although 'tis an imaginary thing.

Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know  
it,

Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be  
king,—

Was reckon'd, a considerable time,  
The grand Napoleon of the realms of  
rhyme.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero  
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean  
seems Cain:

"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at  
zero,

Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise  
again:

## POETS OF THE AGE

But I will fall at least as fell my hero;  
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;  
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,  
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey  
Lowe.

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and  
Campbell  
Before and after; but now grown more  
holy,  
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble  
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;  
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble  
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley  
Powley,  
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,  
A modern Ancient Pistol—by the hilts!

Still he excels that artificial hard  
Labourer in the same vineyard, though  
the vine  
Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—  
That neutralized dull Dorus of the Nine;  
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor  
bard;  
That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every  
line:—  
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least  
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.—



## POETS OF THE AGE

The list grows long of live and dead  
pretenders  
To that which none will gain—or none  
will know  
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time  
renders

His last award, will have the long  
grass grow  
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless  
cinders.

If I might augur, I should rate but low  
Their chances;—they are too numerous,  
like the thirty  
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd  
but dirty.

This is the literary *lower* empire,  
Where the prætorian bands take up the  
matter;—  
A "dreadful trade", like his who "gathers  
saphire",  
The insolent soldiery to soothe and  
flatter,

With the same feelings as you'd coax a  
vampire.  
Now, were I once at home, and in good  
satire,

I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,  
And show them *what* an intellectual war  
is.



# Carpe Diem

FROM "DON JUAN"

"Where is the world?" cries Young, at  
*eighty*—"Where  
The world in which a man was born?"

Alas!

Where is the world of *eight* years past?  
'Twas *there*—

I look for it—'tis gone, a globe of  
glass!  
Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gazed  
on, ere  
A silent change dissolves the glittering  
mass.

Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots,  
kings,  
And dandies, all are gone on the wind's  
wings.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God  
knows:  
Where little Castlereagh? The devil  
can tell:





CARPE DIEM

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady  
That?  
The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?  
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,  
Married, unmarried, and remarried: (this  
is

An evolution oft performed of late).  
Where are the Dublin shouts — and  
London hisses?

Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd, as  
usual. Where  
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where  
they were.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Fran-  
ceses?  
Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye

annals  
So brilliant, where the lists of routs and  
dances is,—  
Thou *Morning Post*, sole record of the  
panels

Broken in carriages, and all the phan-  
tasies  
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill  
those channels?

Some die, some fly, some languish on  
the Continent,  
Because the times have hardly left them  
one tenant.

## CARPE DIEM

Some who once set their caps at cautious  
dukes,

Have taken up at length with younger  
brothers:

Some heiresses have bit at sharpers'  
hooks:

Some maids have been made wives,  
some merely mothers:

Others have lost their fresh and fairy  
looks:

In short, the list of alterations bothers.  
There's little strange in this, but some-  
thing strange is

The unusual quickness of these common  
changes.

Talk not of seventy years as age; in  
seven

I have seen more changes, down from  
monarchs to

The humblest individual under heaven,  
Than might suffice a moderate century  
through.

I knew that nought was lasting, but now  
even

Change grows too changeable, without  
being new:

Nought's permanent among the human  
race,

Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

## CARPE DIEM

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite  
a Jupiter,  
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke  
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,  
If that can well be, than his wooden  
look.  
But it is time that I should hoist my  
"Blue Peter",  
And sail for a new theme:—I have seen  
—and shook  
To see it—the king hiss'd, and then  
carest;  
But don't pretend to settle which was best.  
I have seen the Landholders without a  
rap—  
I have seen Joanna Southcote.—I have  
seen  
The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-  
trap—  
I have seen that sad affair of the late  
Queen—  
I have seen crowns worn instead of a  
fool's cap,  
I have seen a Congress doing all that's  
mean—  
I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded  
asses,  
Kick off their burthens—meaning the  
high classes.

## CARPE DIEM

I have seen small poets, and great prozers,  
and  
Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—  
I have seen the funds at war with house  
and land—  
I have seen the country gentlemen turn  
squeakers—  
I have seen the people ridden o'er like  
sand  
By slaves on horseback—I have seen  
malt liquors  
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John  
Bull—  
I have seen John half detect himself a  
fool.—

But "carpe diem", Juan, "carpe, carpe"!  
To-morrow sees another race as gay  
And transient, and devour'd by the same  
harpy.  
"Life's a poor player",—then "play  
out the play,"  
Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp  
eye  
Much less on what you do than what  
you say:  
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be  
Not what you *seem*, but always what you  
*see*.

# The Age of Indifference

FROM "DON JUAN"

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;  
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt  
the best:  
An eye's an eye, and whether black or  
blue,  
Is no great matter, so 't is in request;  
'Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue—  
The kindest may be taken as a test.  
The fair sex should be always fair; and  
no man,  
Till thirty, should perceive there's a plain  
woman.

And after that serene and somewhat dull  
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for  
days  
More quiet, when our moon's no more at  
full,  
We may presume to criticise or praise;

## *THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE*

Because indifference begins to lull  
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's  
ways;

Also because the figure and the face  
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger  
place.

I know that some would fain postpone  
this era,

Reluctant as all placemen to resign  
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,  
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial  
line:

But then they have their claret and Ma-  
deira,

To irrigate the dryness of decline;  
And county meetings, and the parliament,  
And debt, and what not, for their solace  
sent.

And is there not religion, and reform,  
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's call'd  
the "Nation"?

The struggle to be pilots in a storm?  
The landed and the money'd specula-  
tion?

The joys of mutual hate to keep them  
warm,

Instead of love, that mere hallucina-  
tion?

## THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;  
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, professed,  
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!"—

The only truth that yet has been confessed  
Within these latest thousand years or later.

Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—  
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,

And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,  
Much in the mood of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

But neither love nor hate in much excess;  
Though 't was not once so. If I sneer sometimes,

It is because I cannot well do less,  
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.

I should be very willing to redress  
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,  
(B 213)



## THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale  
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts  
fail.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more  
sad,

Because it makes us smile: his hero's  
right,

And still pursues the right;—to curb the  
bad

His only object, and 'gainst odds to  
fight.

His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him  
mad!

But his adventures form a sorry sight;—  
A sorrier still is the great moral taught,  
By that real epic unto all who have  
thought.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,  
To aid the damsel and destroy the  
caitiff;

Opposing singly the united strong,  
From foreign yoke to free the helpless  
native:—

Alas! must noblest views, like an old  
song,

Be for mere fancy's sport a theme crea-  
tive,

## THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and  
thick sought!  
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quix-  
ote?

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;  
A single laugh demolish'd the right  
arm  
Of his own country;—seldom since that  
day  
Has Spain had heroes. While Ro-  
mance could charm,  
The world gave ground before her bright  
array;  
And therefore have his volumes done  
such harm,  
That all their glory, as a composition,  
Was dearly purchased by his land's per-  
dition.

On My Thirty-  
third Birthday



*January 22, 1821*

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,  
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.  
What have these years left to me?<sup>6</sup>  
Nothing—except thirty-three.

On this Day I  
Complete my  
Thirty-sixth year

MISSOLONGHI,  
Jan. 22, 1824.

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,  
Since others it hath ceased to move:  
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,  
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys  
Is lone as some volcanic isle;  
No torch is kindled at its blaze—  
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,  
The exalted portion of the pain  
And power of love, I cannot share,  
But wear the chain.

## MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

But 'tis not THUS—and 'tis not HERE—  
Such thoughts should shake my soul,  
nor NOW,  
Where glory decks the hero's bier,  
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,  
Glory and Greece, around me see!  
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,  
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)  
Awake my spirit! Think through *WHOM*  
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,  
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,  
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee  
Indifferent should the smile or frown  
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, WHY LIVE?  
The land of honourable death  
Is here:—up to the field, and give  
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—  
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;  
Then look around, and choose thy ground,  
And take thy rest.

## Note

As I have frequently omitted and sometimes transposed stanzas in my quotations from Byron's longer poems, I give here the exact reference to every passage in which any alteration has been made. Where no reference is given, the poem has been printed exactly as it stands in Byron's works.

69. *Napoleon*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 90-92; canto iii, stanzas 36, 42, 43.

73. *Waterloo*. "Childe Harold", canto iii, stanzas 17, 21-30.

83. *Greece*. "The Giaour", lines 103-141.

101. *The Coliseum*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 139-141.

103. *The Dogs' Carnival*. "The Siege of Corinth", stanza 16, lines 17-55.

106. *Mazeppa's Ride*. "Mazeppa", stanza 13, lines 1-40; stanza 17, lines 1-56; stanza 18.

111. *The Falls of Terni*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 69-72.

114. *An August Evening on the Brenta*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 27-29.

## NOTE

116. *Venice*. "Childe Harold," canto iv, stanzas 1-3, 11, 15, 18.
120. *Rome*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 78-81; canto iii, stanzas 107-110.
125. *Nature and Solitude*. "Childe Harold", canto ii, stanzas 25, 26; canto iii, stanzas 72-74, 96, 97.
133. *Stanzas*. Lines 1-30.
149. *Italy and England*. "Beppo", stanzas 41-52.
158. *The Coterics*. "Beppo", stanzas 72-76.
170. *Character of a Learned Lady*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 10-16, 20-22.
176. *Juan and Julia*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 102-105, 113, 114, 116, 117.
180. *Julia's Letter*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 192-198.
184. *Poetical Commandments*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 200-206.
188. *Youth and Fame*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 212-220.
193. *Fame and Time*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 4, 88-95.
198. *The Shipwreck*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 27-53.
211. *Juan and Haidee*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 177-189, 199-201.
219. *Marriage and the Muse*. "Don Juan", canto iii, stanzas 8-11.

## NOTE

222. *Troy*. "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 76-78.
224. *Great Names*. "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 99-107.
229. *Change of Illusions*. "Don Juan", canto v, stanzas 21, 22.
231. *Life*. "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 1-6.
234. *The Glory of War*. "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 80-84.
237. *A Battle-field*. "Don Juan", canto viii, stanzas 6-14.
244. *Wellington*. "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 1-10.
251. *Don Juan at St. Petersburg*. "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 41-45.
254. *Newton and Poets*. "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 1-4.
256. *London*. "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 81-87.
260. *Poets of the Age*. "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 55-63.
265. *Carpe Diem*. "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 76-86.
271. *The Age of Indifference*. "Don Juan", canto xiii, stanzas 3-11.